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MISCELLANEOUS WRITINGS

AND

SPEECHES.

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THE

MISCELLANEOUS WRITINGS

AND

SPEECHES

OF

LORD MACAULAY

Popular Edition

LONDON
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1889

Mrs L. A. Hewett
An Earnest of the
Friendship of
H B Macalliel
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MISCELLANEOUS WRITINGS

PREFACE.

LORD MACAULAY always looked forward to a publication of his miscellaneous works, either by himself or by those who should represent him after his death. And latterly he expressly reserved, whenever the arrangements as to copyright made it necessary, the right of such publication.

The collection which is now published comprehends some of the earliest and some of the latest works which he composed. He was born on 25th October, 1800; commenced residence at Trinity College, Cambridge, in October, 1818; was elected Craven University Scholar in 1821; graduated as B.A. in 1822; was elected fellow of the college in October, 1824; was called to the bar in February, 1826, when he joined the Northern Circuit; and was elected member for Calne in 1830. After this last event, he did not long continue to practise at the bar. He went to India in 1834, whence he returned in June, 1838. He was elected member for Edinburgh, in 1839, and lost this seat in July, 1847;* and this (though he was afterwards again elected for that city in July, 1852, without being a candidate) may be considered as the last instance of his taking an active part in the contests of public life. These few dates are mentioned for the purpose of enabling the reader to assign the articles, now and previously published, to the principal periods into which the author's life may be divided.

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* See p. 464.

The admirers of his later works will probably be interested by watching the gradual formation of his style, and will notice in his earlier productions, vigorous and clear as their language always was, the occurrence of faults against which he afterwards most anxiously guarded himself. A much greater interest will undoubtedly be felt in tracing the date and development of his opinions.

The articles published in Knight's Quarterly Magazine were composed during the author's residence at college, as B.A. It may be remarked that the first two of these exhibit the earnestness with which he already endeavoured to represent to himself and to others the scenes and persons of past times as in actual existence. Of the Dialogue between Milton and Cowley he spoke, many years after its publication, as that one of his works which he remembered with most satisfaction. The article on Mitford's Greece he did not himself value so highly as others thought it deserved. This article, at any rate, contains the first distinct enunciation of his views, as to the office of an historian, views afterwards more fully set forth in his Essay, upon History, in the Edinburgh Review (p. 133 of this collection). From the protest, in the last mentioned essay (p. 155), against the conventional notions respecting the majesty of history might perhaps have been anticipated something like the third chapter of the History of England. It may be amusing to notice that in the article on Mitford (pp. 101, 102) appears the first sketch of the New Zealander, afterwards filled up in a passage in the review of Mrs Austin's translation of Ranke, a passage which at one time was the subject of allusion, two or three times a week, in speeches and leading articles. In this, too, appear, perhaps for the first time, the author's views on the representative system.[*] These he retained to the very last; they are brought forward repeatedly in the articles published in this collection[†] and elsewhere, and in his speeches in parliament; and they coincide with the opinions expressed in the letter to an American correspondent, which was so often cited in the late debate on the Reform Bill.

Some explanation appears to be necessary as to the publication of the three articles which form pages 160 to 225 of this volume.

In 1828 Mr James Mill, the author of the History of British India, reprinted some essays which he had contributed to the Supplement to the Encyclopædia Britannica; and among these was an Essay on Government. The method of inquiry and reasoning adopted in this essay appeared to Macaulay to be essentially wrong. He entertained a very strong conviction that the only sound foundation for a theory of Government must be laid in careful and copious historical induction; and he believed that Mr Mill's work rested upon a vicious reasoning *a priori*. Upon this point he felt the more earnestly, owing to his own passion for historical research, and to his devout admiration of Bacon, whose works he was at that time studying with intense attention. There can, however, be little doubt that he was also provoked by the pretensions of some members of a sect which then commonly went by the name of Benthamites, or Utilitarians. This sect included many of his contemporaries, who had quitted Cambridge at about the same time with him. It had succeeded, in some measure, to the sect of the Byronians, whom he has described in the review of Moore's Life of Lord Byron, who discarded their neckcloths, and fixed little models of skulls on the sand-glasses by which they regulated the boiling of their eggs for breakfast. The members of these sects, and of many others

[*] See p 91.

[†] As at 177, 224.

that have succeeded, have probably long ago learned to smile at the temporary humours. But Macaulay, himself a sincere admirer of Bentham, was irritated by what he considered the unwarranted tone assumed by several of the class of Utilitarians. "We apprehend," he said, "that many of them are persons who, having read little or nothing, are delighted to be rescued from the sense of their own inferiority by some teacher who assures them that the studies which they have neglected are of no value, puts five or six phrases into their mouths, lends them an odd number of the Westminster Review, and in a month transforms them into philosophers;" and he spoke of them as "smatterers, whose attainments just suffice to elevate them from the insignificance of dunces to the dignity of bores, and to spread dismay among their pious aunts and grandmothers." The sect, of course, like other sects, comprehended some pretenders, and these the most arrogant and intolerant among its members. He, however, went so far as to apply the following language to the majority:—"As to the greater part of the sect, it is, we apprehend, of little consequence what they study or under whom. It would be more amusing, to be sure, and more reputable, if they would take up the old republican cant and declaim about Brutus and Timoleon, the duty of killing tyrants and the blessedness of dying for liberty. But, on the whole, they might have chosen worse. They may as well be Utilitarians as jockeys or dandies. And, though quibbling about self-interest and motives, and objects of desire, and the greatest happiness of the greatest number, is but a poor employment for a grown man, it certainly hurts the health less than hard drinking and the fortune less than high play; it is not much more laughable than phrenology, and is immeasurably more humane than cock-fighting."

Macaulay inserted in the Edinburgh Review of March, 1829, an article upon Mr Mill's Essay. He attacked the method with much vehemence ; and, to the end of his life, he never saw any ground for believing that in this he had gone too far. But before long he felt that he had not spoken of the author of the Essay with the respect due to so eminent a man. In 1833, he described Mr Mill, during the debate on the India Bill of that year, as a "gentleman extremely well acquainted with the affairs of our Eastern Empire, a most valuable servant of the Company, and the author of a history of India, which, though certainly not free from faults, is, I think, on the whole, the greatest historical work which has appeared in our language since that of Gibbon."

Almost immediately upon the appearance of the article in the Edinburgh Review, an answer was published in the Westminster Review. It was untruly attributed, in the newspapers of the day, to Mr Bentham himself. Macaulay's answer to this appeared in the Edinburgh Review, June, 1829. He wrote the answer under the belief that he was answering Mr Bentham, and was undeceived in time only to add the postscript. The author of the article in the Westminster Review had not perceived that the question raised was not as to the truth or falsehood of the result at which Mr Mill had arrived, but as to the soundness or unsoundness of the method which he pursued ; a misunderstanding at which Macaulay, while he supposed the article to be the work of Mr Bentham, expressed much surprise. The controversy soon became principally a dispute as to the theory which was commonly known by the name of The Greatest Happiness Principle. Another article in the Westminster Review followed ; and a surrejoinder by Macaulay in the Edinburgh Review of October, 1829. Macaulay was irritated at what he conceived to be either extreme dulness or gross unfairness on the part of his unknown antagonist, and struck as hard as he could ; and he struck very hard indeed.

The ethical question thus raised was afterwards discussed by

Sir James Mackintosh, in the Dissertation contributed by him to the seventh edition of the Encyclopædia Britannica, p. 284-313 (Whewell's Edition). Sir James Mackintosh notices the part taken in the controversy by Macaulay, in the following words: "A writer of consummate ability, who has failed in little but the respect due to the abilities and character of his opponents, has given too much countenance to the abuse and confusion of language exemplified in the well known verse of Pope,

> 'Modes of self-love the Passions we may call.'

'We know,' says he, 'no universal proposition respecting human nature which is true but one—that men always act from self-interest.'" "It is manifest from the sequel, that the writer is not the dupe of the confusion; but many of his readers may be so. If, indeed, the word *self-interest* could with propriety be used for the gratification of every prevalent desire, he has clearly shown that this change in the signification of terms would be of no advantage to the doctrine which he controverts. It would make as many sorts of self-interest as there are appetites, and it is irreconcilably at variance with the system of association proposed by Mr Mill." "The admirable writer whose language has occasioned this illustration, who at an early age has mastered every species of composition, will doubtless hold fast to simplicity, which survives all the fashions of deviation from it, and which a man of genius so fertile has few temptations to forsake."—Note W, p. 296 (p. 430).

When Macaulay selected for publication certain articles of the Edinburgh Review, he resolved not to publish any of the three essays in question; for which he assigned the following reason:—

"The author has been strongly urged to insert three papers

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MISCELLANEOUS WRITINGS
OF
LORD MACAULAY.

CONTRIBUTIONS TO KNIGHT'S QUARTERLY MAGAZINE.

FRAGMENTS OF A ROMAN TALE.
(JUNE 1823.)

. . . .

It was an hour after noon. Ligarius was returning from the Campus Martius. He strolled through one of the streets which led to the Forum, settling his gown, and calculating the odds on the gladiators who were to fence at the approaching Saturnalia. While thus occupied, he overtook Flaminius, who, with a heavy step and a melancholy face, was sauntering in the same direction. The light-hearted young man plucked him by the sleeve.

"Good-day, Flaminius. Are you to be of Catiline's party this evening?"

"Not I."

"Why so? Your little Tarentine girl will break her heart."

"No matter. Catiline has the best cooks and the finest wine in Rome. There are charming women at his parties. But the twelve-line board and the dice-box pay for all. The Gods confound me if I did not lose two millions of sesterces last night. My villa at Tibur, and all the statues that my father the prætor brought from Ephesus, must go to the auctioneer. That is a high price, you will acknowledge, even for Phœnicopters, Chian, and Callinice."

"High indeed, by Pollux."

"And that is not the worst. I saw several of the leading senators this morning. Strange things are whispered in the higher political circles."

"The Gods confound the political circles. I have hated the name of politician ever since Sylla's proscription, when I was within a moment of having my throat cut by a politician, who took me for another politician. While there is a cask of Falernian in Campania, or a girl in the Suburra, I shall be too well employed to think on the subject."

"You will do well," said Flaminius gravely, "to bestow some little consideration upon it at present. Otherwise, I fear, you will soon renew your acquaintance with politicians, in a manner quite as unpleasant as that to which you allude."

"Averting Gods! what do you mean?"

"I will tell you. There are rumours of conspiracy. The order of things established by Lucius Sylla has excited the disgust of the people, and of a large party of the nobles. Some violent convulsion is expected."

"What is that to me? I suppose that they will hardly proscribe the vintners and gladiators, or pass a law compelling every citizen to take a wife."

"You do not understand. Catiline is supposed to be the author of the revolutionary schemes. You must have heard bold opinions at his table repeatedly."

"I never listen to any opinions upon such subjects, bold or timid."

"Look to it. Your name has been mentioned."

"Mine! good Gods! I call Heaven to witness that I never so much as mentioned Senate, Consul, or Comitia, in Catiline's house."

"Nobody suspects you of any participation in the inmost counsels of the party. But our great men surmise that you are among those whom he has bribed so high with beauty, or entangled so deeply in distress, that they are no longer their own masters. I shall never set foot within his threshold again. I have been solemnly warned by men who understand public affairs; and I advise you to be cautious."

The friends had now turned into the Forum, which was thronged with the gay and elegant youth of Rome. "I can tell you more," continued Flaminius; "somebody was remarking to the Consul yesterday how loosely a certain acquaintance of ours tied his girdle. 'Let him look to himself,' said Cicero, 'or the state may find a tighter girdle for his neck.'"

"Good Gods! who is it? You cannot surely mean"——

"There he is."

Flaminius pointed to a man who was pacing up and down the Forum at a little distance from them. He was in the prime of manhood. His personal advantages were extremely striking, and were displayed with an extravagant but not ungraceful foppery. His gown waved in loose folds; his long dark curls were dressed with exquisite art, and shone and steamed with odours; his step and gesture exhibited an elegant and commanding figure in every posture of polite languor. But his countenance formed a singular contrast to the general appearance of his person. The high and imperial brow, the keen aquiline features, the compressed mouth, the penetrating eye, indicated the highest degree of ability and decision. He seemed absorbed in intense meditation. With eyes fixed on the ground, and lips working in thought, he sauntered round the area, apparently unconscious how many of the young gallants of Rome were envying the taste of his dress, and the ease of his fashionable stagger.

"Good Heaven!" said Ligarius, "Caius Cæsar is as unlikely to be in a plot as I am."

"Not at all."

"He does nothing but game, feast, intrigue, read Greek, and write verses."

"You know nothing of Cæsar. Though he rarely addresses the Senate, he is considered as the finest speaker there, after the Consul. His influence with the multitude is immense. He will serve his rivals in public life as he served me last night at Catiline's. We were playing at the twelve lines.*—Immense stakes. He laughed all the time, chatted with Valeria over his shoulder, kissed her hand between every two moves, and scarcely looked at the board. I thought that I had him. All at once I found my counters driven into the corner. Not a piece to move, by Hercules. It cost me two millions of sesterces. All the Gods and Goddesses confound him for it!"

"As to Valeria," said Ligarius, "I forgot to ask whether you have heard the news."

"Not a word. What?"

"I was told at the baths to-day that Cæsar escorted the lady home. Unfortunately old Quintus Lutatius had come back from his villa in Campania, in a whim of jealousy. He was not expected for three days. There was a fine tumult. The old fool called for his sword and his slaves, cursed his wife, and swore that he would cut Cæsar's throat."

"And Cæsar?"

"He laughed, quoted Anacreon, trussed his gown round his left arm, closed with Quintus, flung him down, twisted his sword out of his hand, burst through the attendants, ran a freed-man through the shoulder, and was in the street in an instant."

"Well done! Here he comes. Good-day, Caius."

Cæsar lifted his head at the salutation. His air of deep abstraction vanished; and he extended a hand to each of the friends.

"How are you after your last night's exploit?"

"As well as possible," said Cæsar, laughing.

"In truth we should rather ask how Quintus Lutatius is."

"He, I understand, is as well as can be expected of a man with a faithless spouse and a broken head. His freed-man is most seriously hurt. Poor fellow! he shall have half of whatever I win to-night. Flaminius, you shall have your revenge at Catiline's."

"You are very kind. I do not intend to be at Catiline's till I wish to part with my town-house. My villa is gone already."

"Not at Catiline's, base spirit! You are not of his mind, my gallant Ligarius. Dice, Chian, and the loveliest Greek singing girl that was ever seen. Think of that, Ligarius. By Venus, she almost made me adore her, by telling me that I talked Greek with the most Attic accent that she had heard in Italy."

"I doubt she will not say the same of me," replied Ligarius. "I am just as able to decipher an obelisk as to read a line of Homer."

"You barbarous Scythian, who had the care of your education?"

"An old fool,—a Greek pedant,—a Stoic. He told me that pain was no evil, and flogged me as if he thought so. At last one day, in the middle of a lecture, I set fire to his enormous filthy beard, singed his face, and sent him roaring out of the house. There ended my studies. From that time to this I have had as little to do with Greece as the wine that your poor old friend Lutatius calls his delicious Samian."

"Well done, Ligarius. I hate a Stoic. I wish Marcus Cato had a beard that you might singe it for him. The fool talked his two hours in the Senate yesterday, without changing a muscle of his face. He looked as savage and as motionless as the mask in which Roscius acted Alecto. I detest everything connected with him."

---

* *Duodecim scripta*, a game of mixed chance and skill, which seems to have been very fashionable in the higher circles of Rome. The famous lawyer Mucius was renowned for his skill in it.—(*Cic. Orat.* i. 50.)

"Except his sister, Servilia."

"True. She is a lovely woman."

"They say that you have told her so, Caius."

"So I have."

"And that she was not angry."

"What woman is?"

"Aye—but they say"——

"No matter what they say. Common fame lies like a Greek rhetorician. You might know so much, Ligarius, without reading the philosophers. But come, I will introduce you to little dark-eyed Zoe."

"I tell you I can speak no Greek."

"More shame for you. It is high time that you should begin. You will never have such a charming instructress. Of what was your father thinking when he sent for an old Stoic with a long beard to teach you? There is no language-mistress like a handsome woman. When I was at Athens, I learnt more Greek from a pretty flower-girl in the Peiræus than from all the Portico and the Academy. She was no Stoic, Heaven knows. But come along to Zoe. I will be your interpreter. Woo her in honest Latin, and I will turn it into elegant Greek between the throws of dice. I can make love and mind my game at once, as Flaminius can tell you.

"Well, then, to be plain, Cæsar, Flaminius has been talking to me about plots, and suspicions, and politicians. I never plagued myself with such things since Sylla's and Marius's days; and then I never could see much difference between the parties. All that I am sure of is, that those who meddle with such affairs are generally stabbed or strangled. And, though I like Greek wine and handsome women, I do not wish to risk my neck for them. Now, tell me as a friend, Caius—is there no danger?"

"Danger!" repeated Cæsar, with a short, fierce, disdainful laugh: "what danger do you apprehend?"

"That you should best know," said Flaminius; "you are far more intimate with Catiline than I. But I advise you to be cautious. The leading men entertain strong suspicions."

Cæsar drew up his figure from its ordinary state of graceful relaxation into an attitude of commanding dignity, and replied in a voice of which the deep and impassioned melody formed a strange contrast to the humorous and affected tone of his ordinary conversation. "Let them suspect. They suspect because they know what they have deserved. What have they done for Rome?—What for mankind? Ask the citizens—ask the provinces. Have they had any other object than to perpetuate their own exclusive power, and to keep us under the yoke of an oligarchical tyranny, which unites in itself the worst evils of every other system, and combines more than Athenian turbulence with more than Persian despotism?"

"Good Gods! Cæsar. It is not safe for you to speak, or for us to listen to, such things, at such a crisis."

"Judge for yourselves what you will hear. I will judge for myself what I will speak. I was not twenty years old when I defied Lucius Sylla, surrounded by the spears of legionaries and the daggers of assassins. Do you suppose that I stand in awe of his paltry successors, who have inherited a power which they never could have acquired; who would imitate his proscriptions, though they have never equalled his conquests?"

"Pompey is almost as little to be trifled with as Sylla. I heard a consular senator say that, in consequence of the present alarming state of affairs, he would probably be recalled from the command assigned to him by the Manilian law."

"Let him come,--the pupil of Sylla's butcheries,—the gleaner of Lucullus's trophies,—the thief-taker of the Senate."

"For Heaven's sake, Caius!—if you knew what the Consul said"——

"Something about himself, no doubt. Pity that such talents should be coupled with such cowardice and coxcombry. He is the finest speaker living,—infinitely superior to what Hortensius was, in his best days;—a charming companion, except when he tells over for the twentieth time all the jokes that he made at Verres's trial. But he is the despicable tool of a despicable party."

"Your language, Caius, convinces me that the reports which have been circulated are not without foundation. I will venture to prophesy that within a few months the republic will pass through a whole Odyssey of strange adventures."

"I believe so; an Odyssey, of which Pompey will be the Polyphemus, and Cicero the Siren. I would have the state imitate Ulysses: show no mercy to the former; but contrive, if it can be done, to listen to the enchanting voice of the other, without being seduced by it to destruction."

"But whom can your party produce as rivals to these two famous leaders?"

"Time will show. I would hope that there may arise a man, whose genius to conquer, to conciliate, and to govern, may unite in one cause an oppressed and divided people;—may do all that Sylla should have done, and exhibit the magnificent spectacle of a great nation directed by a great mind."

"And where is such a man to be found?"

"Perhaps where you would least expect to find him. Perhaps he may be one whose powers have hitherto been concealed in domestic or literary retirement. Perhaps he may be one, who, while waiting for some adequate excitement, for some worthy opportunity, squanders on trifles a genius before which may yet be humbled the sword of Pompey and the gown of Cicero. Perhaps he may now be disputing with a sophist; perhaps prattling with a mistress; perhaps"—— and, as he spoke, he turned away, and resumed his lounge, "strolling in the Forum."

. . . .

It was almost midnight. The party had separated. Catiline and Cethegus were still conferring in the supper-room, which was, as usual, the highest apartment of the house. It formed a cupola, from which windows opened on the flat roof that surrounded it. To this terrace Zoe had retired. With eyes dimmed with fond and melancholy tears. she leaned over the balustrade, to catch the last glimpse of the departing form of Cæsar, as it grew more and more indistinct in the moonlight. Had he any thought of her? Any love for her? He, the favourite of the high-born beauties of Rome, the most splendid, the most graceful, the most eloquent of its nobles? It could not be. His voice had, indeed, been touchingly soft whenever he addressed her. There had been a fascinating tenderness even in the vivacity of his look and conversation. But such were always the manners of Cæsar towards women. He had wreathed a sprig of myrtle in her hair as she was singing. She took it from her dark ringlets, and kissed it, and wept over it, and thought of the sweet legends of her own dear Greece,—of youths and girls, who, pining away in hopeless love, had been transformed into flowers by the compassion of the Gods; and she wished to become a flower, which Cæsar might sometimes touch, though he should touch it only to weave a crown for some prouder and happier mistress.

She was roused from her musings by the loud step and voice of Cethegus, who was pacing furiously up and down the supper-room.

"May all the Gods confound me, if Cæsar be not the deepest traitor, or the most miserable idiot, that ever intermeddled with a plot!"

Zoe shuddered. She drew nearer to the window. She stood concealed from observation by the curtain of fine network which hung over the aperture, to exclude the annoying insects of the climate.

"And you too!" continued Cethegus, turning fiercely on his accomplice; "you to take his part against me!—you, who proposed the scheme yourself!"

"My dear Caius Cethegus, you will not understand me. I proposed the scheme; and I will join in executing it. But policy is as necessary to our plans as boldness. I did not wish to startle Cæsar—to lose his co-operation—perhaps to send him off with an information against us to Cicero and Catulus. He was so indignant at your suggestion that all my dissimulation was scarcely sufficient to prevent a total rupture."

"Indignant! The Gods confound him!—He prated about humanity, and generosity, and moderation. By Hercules, I have not heard such a lecture since I was with Xenochares at Rhodes."

"Cæsar is made up of inconsistencies. He has boundless ambition, unquestioned courage, admirable sagacity. Yet I have frequently observed in him a womanish weakness at the sight of pain. I remember that once one of his slaves was taken ill while carrying his litter. He alighted, put the fellow in his place and walked home in a fall of snow. I wonder that you could be so ill-advised as to talk to him of massacre, and pillage, and conflagration. You might have foreseen that such propositions would disgust a man of his temper."

"I do not know. I have not your self-command, Lucius. I hate such conspirators. What is the use of them? We must have blood—blood,—hacking and tearing work—bloody work!"

"Do not grind your teeth, my dear Caius; and lay down the carving-knife. By Hercules, you have cut up all the stuffing of the couch."

"No matter; we shall have couches enough soon,—and down to stuff them with,—and purple to cover them,—and pretty women to loll on them,—unless this fool, and such as he, spoil our plans. I had something else to say. The essenced fop wishes to seduce Zoe from me."

"Impossible! You misconstrue the ordinary gallantries which he is in the habit of paying to every handsome face."

"Curse on his ordinary gallantries, and his verses, and his compliments, and his sprigs of myrtle! If Cæsar should dare—by Hercules, I will tear him to pieces in the middle of the Forum."

"Trust his destruction to me. We must use his talents and influence—thrust him upon every danger—make him our instrument while we are contending—our peace-offering to the Senate if we fail—our first victim if we succeed."

"Hark! what noise was that?"

"Somebody in the terrace!—lend me your dagger."

Catiline rushed to the window. Zoe was standing in the shade. He stepped out. She darted into the room—passed like a flash of lightning by the startled Cethegus—flew down the stairs—through the court—through the vestibule—through the street. Steps, voices, lights, came fast and confusedly behind her; but with the speed of love and terror she gained upon her pursuers. She fled through the wilderness of unknown and dusky streets, till she found herself, breathless and exhausted, in the midst of a crowd of gallants, who, with chaplets on their heads and torches in their hands, were reeling from the portico of a stately mansion.

The foremost of the throng was a youth whose slender figure and beautiful countenance seemed hardly consistent with his sex. But the feminine delicacy of his features rendered more frightful the mingled sensuality and ferocity of their expression. The libertine audacity of his stare, and the grotesque foppery of his apparel, seemed to indicate at least a partial insanity. Flinging one arm round Zoe, and tearing away her veil with the other, he disclosed to the gaze of his thronging companions the regular features and large dark eyes which characterise Athenian beauty.

"Clodius has all the luck to-night," cried Ligarius.

"Not so, by Hercules," said Marcus Cœlius; "the girl is fairly our common prize: we will fling dice for her. The Venus* throw, as it ought to do, shall decide."

"Let me go—let me go, for Heaven's sake," cried Zoe, struggling with Clodius.

"What a charming Greek accent she has! Come into the house, my little Athenian nightingale."

"Oh! what will become of me? If you have mothers—if you have sisters"——

"Clodius has a sister," muttered Ligarius, "or he is much belied."

"By Heaven, she is weeping," said Clodius.

"If she were not evidently a Greek," said Cœlius, "I should take her for a vestal virgin."

"And if she were a vestal virgin," cried Clodius fiercely, "it should not deter me. This way;—no struggling—no screaming."

"Struggling! screaming!" exclaimed a gay and commanding voice; "You are making very ungentle love, Clodius."

The whole party started. Cæsar had mingled with them unperceived. The sound of his voice thrilled through the very heart of Zoe. With a convulsive effort she burst from the grasp of her insolent admirer, flung herself at the feet of Cæsar, and clasped his knees. The moon shone full on her agitated and imploring face: her lips moved; but she uttered no sound. He gazed at her for an instant—raised her—clasped her to his bosom. "Fear nothing, my sweet Zoe." Then, with folded arms, and a smile of placid defiance, he placed himself between her and Clodius.

Clodius staggered forward, flushed with wine and rage, and uttering alternately a curse and a hiccup.

"By Pollux, this passes a jest. Cæsar, how dare you insult me thus?"

"A jest! I am as serious as a Jew on the Sabbath. Insult you; for such a pair of eyes I would insult the whole consular bench, or I should be as insensible as King Psammis's mummy."

"Good Gods, Cæsar!" said Marcus Cœlius, interposing; "you cannot think it worth while to get into a brawl for a little Greek girl!"

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* Venus was the Roman term for the highest throw on the dice.

"Why not? The Greek girls have used me as well as those of Rome. Besides, the whole reputation of my gallantry is at stake. Give up such a lovely woman to that drunken boy! My character would be gone for ever. No more perfumed tablets, full of vows and raptures. No more toying with fingers at the circus. No more evening walks along the Tiber. No more hiding in chests or jumping from windows. I, the favoured suitor of half the white stoles in Rome, could never again aspire above a freed-woman. You a man of gallantry, and think of such a thing! For shame, my dear Cœlius! Do not let Clodia hear of it."

While Cæsar spoke he had been engaged in keeping Clodius at arm's-length. The rage of the frantic libertine increased as the struggle continued. "Stand back, as you value your life," he cried; "I will pass."

"Not this way, sweet Clodius. I have too much regard for you to suffer you to make love at such disadvantage. You smell too much of Falernian at present. Would you stifle your mistress? By Hercules, you are fit to kiss nobody now, except old Piso, when he is tumbling home in the morning from the vintners." *

Clodius plunged his hand into his bosom and drew a little dagger, the faithful companion of many desperate adventures.

"Oh, Gods! he will be murdered!" cried Zoe.

The whole throng of revellers was in agitation. The street fluctuated with torches and lifted hands. It was but for a moment. Cæsar watched with a steady eye the descending hand of Clodius, arrested the blow, seized his antagonist by the throat, and flung him against one of the pillars of the portico with such violence, that he rolled, stunned and senseless, on the ground.

"He is killed," cried several voices.

"Fair self-defence, by Hercules!" said Marcus Cœlius. "Bear witness, you all saw him draw his dagger."

"He is not dead—he breathes," said Ligarius. "Carry him into the house; he is dreadfully bruised."

The rest of the party retired with Clodius. Cœlius turned to Cæsar.

"By all the Gods, Caius! you have won your lady fairly. A splendid victory! You deserve a triumph."

"What a madman Clodius has become!"

"Intolerable. But come and sup with me on the Nones. You have no objection to meet the Consul?"

"Cicero? None at all. We need not talk politics. Our old dispute about Plato and Epicurus will furnish us with plenty of conversation. So reckon upon me, my dear Marcus, and farewell."

Cæsar and Zoe turned away. As soon as they were beyond hearing, she began in great agitation:—

"Cæsar, you are in danger. I know all. I overheard Catiline and Cethegus. You are engaged in a project which must lead to certain destruction."

"My beautiful Zoe, I live only for glory and pleasure. For these I have never hesitated to hazard an existence which they alone render valuable to me. In the present case, I can assure you that our scheme presents the fairest hopes of success."

"So much the worse. You do not know—you do not understand me. I speak not of open peril, but of secret treachery. Catiline hates you;—Cethegus hates you;—your destruction is resolved. If you survive the

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* Cic. in Pis.

contest, you perish in the first hour of victory. They detest you for your moderation; they are eager for blood and plunder. I have risked my life to bring you this warning; but that is of little moment. Farewell! —Be happy."

Cæsar stopped her. "Do you fly from my thanks, dear Zoe?"

"I wish not for your thanks, but for your safety;—I desire not to defraud Valeria or Servilia of one caress, extorted from gratitude or pity. Be my feelings what they may, I have learnt in a fearful school to endure and to suppress them. I have been taught to abase a proud spirit to the claps and hisses of the vulgar;—to smile on suitors who united the insults of a despicable pride to the endearments of a loathsome fondness;—to affect sprightliness with an aching head, and eyes from which tears were ready to gush;—to feign love with curses on my lips, and madness in my brain. Who feels for me any esteem,—any tenderness? Who will shed a tear over the nameless grave which will soon shelter from cruelty and scorn the broken heart of the poor Athenian girl? But you, who alone have addressed her in her degradation with a voice of kindness and respect, farewell. Sometimes think of me,—not with sorrow;—no; I could bear your ingratitude, but not your distress. Yet, if it will not pain you too much, in distant days, when your lofty hopes and destinies are accomplished,—on the evening of some mighty victory, —in the chariot of some magnificent triumph,—think on one who loved you with that exceeding love which only the miserable can feel. Think that, wherever her exhausted frame may have sunk beneath the sensibilities of a tortured spirit,—in whatever hovel or whatever vault she may have closed her eyes,—whatever strange scenes of horror and pollution may have surrounded her dying bed, your shape was the last that swam before her sight—your voice the last sound that was ringing in her ears. Yet turn your face to me, Cæsar. Let me carry away one last look of those features, and then"—— He turned round. He looked at her. He hid his face on her bosom, and burst into tears. With sobs long and loud, and convulsive as those of a terrified child, he poured forth on her bosom the tribute of impetuous and uncontrollable emotion. He raised his head; but he in vain struggled to restore composure to the brow which had confronted the frown of Sylla, and the lips which had rivalled the eloquence of Cicero. He several times attempted to speak, but in vain; and his voice still faltered with tenderness, when, after a pause of several minutes, he thus addressed her:

"My own dear Zoe, your love has been bestowed on one who, if he cannot merit, can at least appreciate and adore you. Beings of similar loveliness, and similar devotedness of affection, mingled, in all my boyish dreams of greatness, with visions of curule chairs and ivory cars, marshalled legions and laurelled fasces. Such I have endeavoured to find in the world; and, in their stead, I have met with selfishness, with vanity, with frivolity, with falsehood. The life which you have preserved is a boon less valuable than the affection"——

"Oh! Cæsar," interrupted the blushing Zoe, "think only on your own security at present. If you feel as you speak,—but you are only mocking me,—or perhaps your compassion"——

"By Heaven!—by every oath that is binding"——

"Alas! alas! Cæsar, were not all the same oaths sworn yesterday to Valeria? But I will trust you, at least so far as to partake your present dangers. Flight may be necessary:—form your plans. Be they what they may, there is one who, in exile, in poverty, in peril, asks only to wander, to beg, to die with you."

"My Zoe, I do not anticipate any such necessity. To renounce the conspiracy without renouncing the principles on which it was originally undertaken,—to elude the vengeance of the Senate without losing the confidence of the people,—is, indeed, an arduous, but not an impossible, task. I owe it to myself and to my country to make the attempt. There is still ample time for consideration. At present I am too happy in love to think of ambition or danger."

They had reached the door of a stately palace. Cæsar struck it. It was instantly opened by a slave. Zoe found herself in a magnificent hall, surrounded by pillars of green marble, between which were ranged the statues of the long line of Julian nobles.

"Call Endymion," said Cæsar.

The confidential freed-man made his appearance, not without a slight smile, which his patron's good nature emboldened him to hazard, at perceiving the beautiful Athenian.

"Arm my slaves, Endymion; there are reasons for precaution. Let them relieve each other on guard during the night. Zoe, my love, my preserver, why are your cheeks so pale? Let me kiss some bloom into them. How you tremble! Endymion, a flask of Samian and some fruit. Bring them to my apartments. This way, my sweet Zoe."

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ON THE ROYAL SOCIETY OF LITERATURE.

(June 1823.)

This is the age of societies. There is scarcely one Englishman in ten who has not belonged to some association for distributing books, or for prosecuting them; for sending invalids to the hospital, or beggars to the treadmill; for giving plate to the rich, or blankets to the poor. To be the most absurd institution among so many institutions is no small distinction; it seems, however, to belong indisputably to the Royal Society of Literature. At the first establishment of that ridiculous academy, every sensible man predicted that, in spite of regal patronage and episcopal management, it would do nothing, or do harm. And it will scarcely be denied that those expectations have hitherto been fulfilled.

I do not attack the founders of the association. Their characters are respectable; their motives, I am willing to believe, were laudable. But I feel, and it is the duty of every literary man to feel, a strong jealousy of their proceedings. Their society can be innocent only while it continues to be despicable. Should they ever possess the power to encourage merit, they must also possess the power to depress it. Which power will be more frequently exercised, let every one who has studied literary history, let every one who has studied human nature, declare.

Envy and faction insinuate themselves into all communities. They often disturb the peace, and pervert the decisions, of benevolent and scientific associations. But it is in literary academies that they exert the most extensive and pernicious influence. In the first place, the principles of literary criticism, though equally fixed with those on which the chemist and the surgeon proceed, are by no means equally recognised. Men are rarely able to assign a reason for their approbation or dislike on questions of taste; and therefore they willingly submit to any guide who boldly asserts his claim to superior discernment. It is more difficult to ascertain and establish the merits of a poem than the powers of a machine or the benefits of a new remedy. Hence it is in literature, that quackery is most easily puffed, and excellence most easily decried.

In some degree this argument applies to academies of the fine arts; and it is fully confirmed by all that I have ever heard of that institution which annually disfigures the walls of Somerset House with an acre of spoiled canvas. But a literary tribunal is incomparably more dangerous. Other societies, at least, have no tendency to call forth any opinions on those subjects which most agitate and inflame the minds of men. The sceptic and the zealot, the revolutionist and the placeman, meet on common ground in a gallery of paintings or a laboratory of science. They can praise or censure without reference to the differences which exist between them. In a literary body this can never be the case. Literature is, and always must be, inseparably blended with politics and theology; it is the great engine which moves the feelings of a people on the most momentous questions. It is, therefore, impossible that any society can be formed so impartial as to consider the literary character of an individual abstracted from the opinions which his writings inculcate. It is not to be hoped, perhaps it is not to be wished, that the feelings of the man should be so completely forgotten in the duties of the academician. The consequences are evident. The honours and censures of this Star Chamber of the Muses will be awarded according to the prejudices of the particular sect or faction which may at the time predominate. Whigs would canvass against a Southey, Tories against a Byron. Those who might at first protest against such conduct as unjust would soon adopt it on the plea of retaliation; and the general good of literature, for which the society was professedly instituted, would be forgotten in the stronger claims of political and religious partiality.

Yet even this is not the worst. Should the institution ever acquire any influence, it will afford most pernicious facilities to every malignant coward who may desire to blast a reputation which he envies. It will furnish a secure ambuscade, behind which the Maroons of literature may take a certain and deadly aim. The editorial *we* has often been fatal to rising genius; though all the world knows that it is only a form of speech, very often employed by a single needy blockhead. The academic *we* would have a far greater and more ruinous influence. Numbers, while they increase the effect, would diminish the shame, of injustice. The advantages of an open and those of an anonymous attack would be combined; and the authority of avowal would be united to the security of concealment. The serpents in Virgil, after they had destroyed Laocoon, found an asylum from the vengeance of the enraged people behind the shield of the statue of Minerva. And, in the same manner, everything that is grovelling and venomous, everything that can hiss, and everything that can sting, would take sanctuary in the recesses of this new temple of wisdom.

The French academy was, of all such associations, the most widely and the most justly celebrated. It was founded by the greatest of ministers: it was patronised by successive kings; it numbered in its lists most of the eminent French writers. Yet what benefit has literature derived from its labours? What is its history but an uninterrupted record of servile compliances—of paltry artifices—of deadly quarrels—of perfidious friendships? Whether governed by the Court, by the Sorbonne, or by the Philosophers, it was always equally powerful for evil, and equally impotent for good. I might speak of the attacks by which it attempted to depress the rising fame of Corneille; I might speak of the reluctance with which it gave its tardy confirmation to the applauses which the whole civilised world had bestowed on the genius of Voltaire. I might prove by overwhelming evidence that, to the latest period of its existence, even under the superintendence of the all-accomplished D'Alembert, it continued to be a scene of the fiercest animosities and the basest intrigues. I might cite Piron's epigrams, and Marmontel's memoirs, and Montesquieu's letters. But I hasten on to another topic.

One of the modes by which our Society proposes to encourage merit is the distribution of prizes. The munificence of the king has enabled it to offer an annual premium of a hundred guineas for the best essay in prose, and another of fifty guineas for the best poem, which may be transmitted to it. This is very laughable. In the first place the judges may err. Those imperfections of human intellect to which, as the articles of the Church tell us, even general councils are subject, may possibly be found even in the Royal Society of Literature. The French academy, as I have already said, was the most illustrious assembly of the kind, and numbered among its associates men much more distinguished than ever will assemble at Mr Hatchard's to rummage the box of the English Society. Yet this famous body gave a poetical prize, for which Voltaire was a candidate, to a fellow who wrote some verses about *the frozen and the burning pole.*

Yet, granting that the prizes were always awarded to the best composition, that composition, I say without hesitation, will always be bad. A prize poem is like a prize sheep. The object of the competitor for the agricultural premium is to produce an animal fit, not to be eaten, but to be weighed. Accordingly he pampers his victim into morbid and unnatural fatness; and, when it is in such a state that it would be sent away in disgust from any table, he offers it to the judges. The object of the poetical candidate, in like manner, is to produce, not a good poem, but a poem of that exact degree of frigidity or bombast which may appear to his censors to be correct or sublime. Compositions thus constructed will always be worthless. The few excellences which they may contain will have an exotic aspect and flavour. In general, prize sheep are good for nothing but to make tallow candles, and prize poems are good for nothing but to light them.

The first subject proposed by the Society to the poets of England was Dartmoor. I thought that they intended a covert sarcasm at their own projects. Their institution was a literary Dartmoor scheme;—a plan for forcing into cultivation the waste lands of intellect,—for raising poetical produce, by means of bounties, from soil too meagre to have yielded any returns in the natural course of things. The plan for the cultivation of Dartmoor has, I hear, been abandoned. I hope that this may be an omen of the fate of the Society.

In truth, this seems by no means improbable. They have been offering for several years the rewards which the king placed at their disposal, and have not, as far as I can learn, been able to find in their box one composition which they have deemed worthy of publication. At least no publication has taken place. The associates may perhaps be astonished at this. But I will attempt to explain it, after the manner of ancient times, by means of an apologue.

About four hundred years after the Deluge, King Gomer Chephoraod reigned in Babylon. He united all the characteristics of an excellent sovereign. He made good laws, won great battles, and white-washed long streets. He was, in consequence, idolised by his people, and panegyrised by many poets and orators. A book was then a serious undertaking. Neither paper nor any similar material had been invented. Authors were therefore under the necessity of inscribing their compositions on massive bricks. Some of these Babylonian records are still preserved in European museums; but the language in which they are written has never been deciphered. Gomer Chephoraod was so popular that the clay of all the plains round the Euphrates could scarcely furnish brick-kilns enough for his eulogists. It is recorded in particular that Pharonezzar, the Assyrian Pindar, published a bridge and four walls in his praise.

One day the king was going in state from his palace to the temple of Belus. During this procession it was lawful for any Babylonian to offer any petition or suggestion to his sovereign. As the chariot passed before a vintner's shop, a large company, apparently half-drunk, sallied forth into the street, and one of them thus addressed the king:

"Gomer Chephoraod, live for ever! It appears to thy servants that of all the productions of the earth good wine is the best, and bad wine is the worst. Good wine makes the heart cheerful, the eyes bright, the speech ready. Bad wine confuses the head, disorders the stomach, makes us quarrelsome at night, and sick the next morning. Now therefore let my lord the king take order that thy servants may drink good wine."

"And how is this to be done?" said the good-natured prince.

"O King," said his monitor, "this is most easy. Let the king make a decree, and seal it with his royal signet: and let it be proclaimed that the king will give ten she-asses, and ten slaves, and ten changes of raiment, every year, unto the man who shall make ten measures of the best wine. And whosoever wishes for the she-asses, and the slaves, and the raiment, let him send the ten measures of wine to thy servants, and we will drink thereof and judge. So shall there be much good wine in Assyria."

The project pleased Gomer Chephoraod. "Be it so," said he. The people shouted. The petitioners prostrated themselves in gratitude. The same night heralds were despatched to bear the intelligence to the remotest districts of Assyria.

After a due interval the wines began to come in; and the examiners assembled to adjudge the prize. The first vessel was unsealed. Its odour was such that the judges, without tasting it, pronounced unanimous condemnation. The next was opened: it had a villainous taste of clay. The third was sour and vapid. They proceeded from one cask of execrable liquor to another, till at length, in absolute nausea, they gave up the investigation.

The next morning they all assembled at the gate of the king, with pale faces and aching heads. They owned that they could not recommend any competitor as worthy of the rewards. They swore that the wine was little better than poison, and entreated permission to resign the office of deciding between such detestable potions.

"In the name of Belus, how can this have happened?" said the king.

Merolchazzar, the high-priest, muttered something about the anger of the Gods at the toleration shown to a sect of impious heretics who ate pigeons broiled, "whereas," said he, "our religion commands us to eat them roasted. Now therefore, O King," continued this respectable divine, "give command to thy men of war, and let them smite the disobedient people with the sword, them, and their wives, and their children, and let their houses, and their flocks, and their herds, be given to thy servants the priests. Then shall the land yield its increase, and the fruits of the earth shall be no more blasted by the vengeance of Heaven."

"Nay," said the king, "the ground lies under no general curse from Heaven. The season has been singularly good. The wine which thou didst thyself drink at the banquet a few nights ago, O venerable Merolchazzar, was of this year's vintage. Dost thou not remember how thou didst praise it? It was the same night that thou wast inspired by Belus and didst reel to and fro, and discourse sacred mysteries. These things are too hard for me. I comprehend them not. The only wine which is bad is that which is sent to my judges. Who can expound this to us?"

The king scratched his head. Upon which all the courtiers scratched their heads.

He then ordered proclamation to be made that a purple robe and a golden chain should be given to the man who could solve this difficulty.

An old philosopher, who had been observed to smile rather disdainfully when the prize had first been instituted, came forward and spoke thus:—

"Gomer Chephoraod, live for ever! Marvel not at that which has happened. It was no miracle, but a natural event. How could it be otherwise? It is true that much good wine has been made this year. But who would send it in for thy rewards? Thou knowest Ascobaruch who hath the great vineyards in the north, and Cohahiroth who sendeth wine every year from the south over the Persian Gulf. Their wines are so delicious that ten measures thereof are sold for an hundred talents of silver. Thinkest thou that they will exchange them for thy slaves and thine asses? What would thy prize profit any who have vineyards in rich soils?

"Who then," said one of the judges, "are the wretches who sent us this poison?"

"Blame them not," said the sage, "seeing that you have been the authors of the evil. They are men whose lands are poor, and have never yielded them any returns equal to the prizes which the king proposed. Wherefore, knowing that the lords of the fruitful vineyards would not enter into competition with them they planted vines, some on rocks, and some in light sandy soil, and some in deep clay. Hence their wines are bad. For no culture or reward will make barren land bear good vines. Know therefore, assuredly, that your prizes have increased the quantity of bad but not of good wine."

There was a long silence. At length the king spoke. "Give him the purple robe and the chain of gold. Throw the wines into the Euphrates; and proclaim that the Royal Society of Wines is dissolved."

SCENES FROM "ATHENIAN REVELS."

(JANUARY 1824.)

A DRAMA.

I.

SCENE—*A Street in Athens.*

Enter CALLIDEMUS *and* SPEUSIPPUS.

CALLIDEMUS.

So, you young reprobate! You must be a man of wit, forsooth, and a man of quality! You must spend as if you were as rich as Nicias, and prate as if you were as wise as Pericles! You must dangle after sophists and pretty women! And I must pay for all! I must sup on thyme and onions, while you are swallowing thrushes and hares! I must drink water, that you may play the cottabus* with Chian wine! I must wander about as ragged as Pauson,† that you may be as fine as Alcibiades! I must lie on bare boards, with a stone‡ for my pillow, and a rotten mat for my coverlid, by the light of a wretched winking lamp, while you are marching in state, with as many torches as one sees at the feast of Ceres, to thunder with your hatchet§ at the doors of half the Ionian ladies in Peiræus.||

SPEUSIPPUS.

Why, thou unreasonable old man! Thou most shameless of fathers!——

CALLIDEMUS.

Ungrateful wretch; dare you talk so? Are you not afraid of the thunders of Jupiter?

SPEUSIPPUS.

Jupiter thunder! nonsense! Anaxagoras says, that thunder is only an explosion produced by——

CALLIDEMUS.

He does! Would that it had fallen on his head for his pains!

SPEUSIPPUS.

Nay: talk rationally.

CALLIDEMUS.

Rationally! You audacious young sophist! I will talk rationally. Do you know that I am your father? What quibble can you make upon that?

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* This game consisted in projecting wine out of cups; it was a diversion extremely fashionable at Athenian entertainments.

† Pauson was an Athenian painter, whose name was synonymous with beggary. See Aristophanes; Plutus, 602. From his poverty, I am inclined to suppose that he painted historical pictures.

‡ See Aristophanes; Plutus, 542.

§ See Theocritus; Idyll ii. 128.

|| This was the most disreputable part of Athens. See Aristophanes; Pax, 165.

SPEUSIPPUS.

Do I know that you are my father? Let us take the question to pieces, as Melesigenes would say. First, then, we must inquire what is knowledge? Secondly, what is a father? Now, knowledge, as Socrates said the other day to Theætetus *——

CALLIDEMUS.

Socrates! what! the ragged flat-nosed old dotard, who walks about all day barefoot, and filches cloaks, and dissects gnats, and shoes† fleas with wax?

SPEUSIPPUS.

All fiction! All trumped up by Aristophanes!

CALLIDEMUS.

By Pallas, if he is in the habit of putting shoes on his fleas, he is kinder to them than to himself. But listen to me, boy; if you go on in this way, you will be ruined. There is an argument for you. Go to your Socrates and your Melesigenes, and tell them to refute that. Ruined! Do you hear?

SPEUSIPPUS.

Ruined!

CALLIDEMUS.

Ay, by Jupiter! Is such a show as you make to be supported on nothing? During all the last war, I made not an obol from my farm; the Peloponnesian locusts came almost as regularly as the Pleiades;—corn burnt;—olives stripped;—fruit trees cut down;—wells stopped up;—and, just when peace came, and I hoped that all would turn out well, you must begin to spend as if you had all the mines of Thasus at command.

SPEUSIPPUS.

Now, by Neptune, who delights in horses——

CALLIDEMUS.

If Neptune delights in horses, he does not resemble me. You must ride at the Panathenæa on a horse fit for the great king: four acres of my best vines went for that folly. You must retrench, or you will have nothing to eat. Does not Anaxagoras mention, among his other discoveries, that when a man has nothing to eat he dies?

SPEUSIPPUS.

You are deceived. My friends——

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* See Plato's Theætetus.

† See Aristophanes; Nubes. 150.

CALLIDEMUS.

Oh, yes! your friends will notice you, doubtless, when you are squeezing through the crowd, on a winter's day, to warm yourself at the fire of the baths;—or when you are fighting with beggars and beggars' dogs for the scraps of a sacrifice;—or when you are glad to earn three wretched obols* by listening all day to lying speeches and crying children.

SPEUSIPPUS.

There are other means of support.

CALLIDEMUS.

What! I suppose you will wander from house to house, like that wretched buffoon Philippus,† and beg everybody who has asked a supper-party to be so kind as to feed you and laugh at you; or you will turn sycophant; you will get a bunch of grapes, or a pair of shoes, now and then, by frightening some rich coward with a mock prosecution. Well! that is a task for which your studies under the sophists may have fitted you.

SPEUSIPPUS.

You are wide of the mark.

CALLIDEMUS.

Then what, in the name of Juno, is your scheme? Do you intend to join Orestes,‡ and rob on the highway? Take care; beware of the eleven;§ beware of the hemlock. It may be very pleasant to live at other people's expense; but not very pleasant, I should think, to hear the pestle give its last bang against the mortar, when the cold dose is ready. Pah!——

SPEUSIPPUS.

Hemlock? Orestes! folly!—I aim at nobler objects. What say you to politics,—the general assembly?

CALLIDEMUS.

You an orator!—oh no! no! Cleon was worth twenty such fools as you. You have succeeded, I grant, to his impudence, for which, if there be justice in Tartarus, he is now soaking up to the eyes in his own tan-pickle. But the Paphlagonian had parts.

SPEUSIPPUS.

And you mean to imply——

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* The stipend of an Athenian juryman.

† Xenophon; Convivium.

‡ A celebrated highwayman of Attica. See Aristophanes; Aves, 711; and in several other passages.

§ The police officers of Athens.

CALLIDEMUS.

Not I. You are a Pericles in embryo, doubtless. Well: and when are you to make your first speech? O Pallas!

SPEUSIPPUS.

I thought of speaking, the other day, on the Sicilian expedition; but Nicias* got up before me.

CALLIDEMUS.

Nicias, poor honest man, might just as well have sate still; his speaking did but little good. The loss of your oration is, doubtless, an irreparable public calamity.

SPEUSIPPUS.

Why, not so; I intend to introduce it at the next assembly; it will suit any subject.

CALLIDEMUS.

That is to say, it will suit none. But pray, if it be not too presumptuous a request, indulge me with a specimen.

SPEUSIPPUS.

Well; suppose the agora crowded;—an important subject under discussion;—an ambassador from Argos, or from the great king;—the tributes from the islands;—an impeachment;—in short, anything you please. The crier makes proclamation.—"Any citizen above fifty years old may speak—any citizen not disqualified may speak." Then I rise:—a great murmur of curiosity while I am mounting the stand.

CALLIDEMUS.

Of cusiosity! yes, and of something else too. You will infallibly be dragged down by main force, like poor Glaucon† last year.

SPEUSIPPUS.

Never fear. I shall begin in this style:

"When I consider, Athenians, the importance of our city;—when I consider the extent of its power, the wisdom of its laws, the elegance of its decorations;—when I consider by what names and by what exploits its annals are adorned; when I think on Harmodius and Aristogiton, on Themistocles and Miltiades, on Cimon and Pericles;—when I contemplate our pre-eminence in arts and letters;—when I observe so many flourishing states and islands compelled to own the dominion, and purchase the protection of the City of the Violet Crown" ‡——

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* See Thucydides, vi. 8.

† See Xenophon; Memorabilia, iii.

‡ A favourite epithet of Athens. See Aristophanes; Acharn. 637.

CALLIDEMUS.

I shall choke with rage. Oh, all ye gods and goddesses, what sacrilege, what perjury have I ever committed, that I should be singled out from among all the citizens of Athens to be the father of this fool?

SPEUSIPPUS.

What now? By Bacchus, old man, I would not advise you to give way to such fits of passion in the streets. If Aristophanes were to see you, you would infallibly be in a comedy next spring.

CALLIDEMUS.

You have more reason to fear Aristophanes than any fool living. Oh, that he could but hear you trying to imitate the slang of Straton [*] and the lisp of Alcibiades! [†] You would be an inexhaustible subject. You would console him for the loss of Cleon.

SPEUSIPPUS.

No, no. I may perhaps figure at the dramatic representations before long; but in a very different way.

CALLIDEMUS.

What do you mean?

SPEUSIPPUS.

What say you to a tragedy?

CALLIDEMUS.

A tragedy of yours?

SPEUSIPPUS.

Even so.

CALLIDEMUS.

Oh Hercules! Oh Bacchus! This is too much. Here is an universal genius; sophist,—orator,—poet. To what a three-headed monster have I given birth! a perfect Cerberus of intellect! And pray what may your piece be about? Or will your tragedy, like your speech, serve equally for any subject?

SPEUSIPPUS.

I thought of several plots;—Œdipus,—Eteocles and Polynices,—the war of Troy,—the murder of Agamemnon.

CALLIDEMUS.

And what have you chosen?

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[*] See Aristophanes; Equites, 1375.

[†] See Aristophanes; Vespæ, 44.

SPEUSIPPUS.

You know there is a law which permits any modern poet to retouch a play of Æschylus, and bring it forward as his own composition. And, as there is an absurd prejudice, among the vulgar, in favour of his extravagant pieces, I have selected one of them, and altered it.

CALLIDEMUS.

Which of them?

SPEUSIPPUS.

Oh! that mass of barbarous absurdities, the Prometheus. But I have framed it anew upon the model of Euripides. By Bacchus, I shall make Sophocles and Agathon look about them. You would not know the play again.

CALLIDEMUS.

By Jupiter, I believe not.

SPEUSIPPUS.

I have omitted the whole of the absurd dialogue between Vulcan and Strength, at the beginning.

CALLIDEMUS.

That may be, on the whole, an improvement. The play will then open with that grand soliloquy of Prometheus, when he is chained to the rock.

"Oh! ye eternal heavens! ye rushing winds!
Ye fountains of great streams! Ye ocean waves,
That in ten thousand sparkling dimples wreathe
Your azure smiles! All-generating earth!
All-seeing sun! On you, on you, I call."*

Well, I allow that will be striking; I did not think you capable of that idea. Why do you laugh?

SPEUSIPPUS.

Do you seriously suppose that one who has studied the plays of that great man, Euripides, would ever begin a tragedy in such a ranting style?

CALLIDEMUS.

What, does not your play open with the speech of Prometheus?

SPEUSIPPUS.

No doubt.

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* See Æschylus: Prometheus, 88.

CALLIDEMUS.

Then what, in the name of Bacchus, do you make him say?

SPEUSIPPUS.

You shall hear; and, if it be not in the very style of Euripides, call me a fool.

CALLIDEMUS.

That is a liberty which I shall venture to take, whether it be or no. But go on.

SPEUSIPPUS.

Prometheus begins thus:—

"Cœlus begat Saturn and Briareus
Cottus and Creius and Iapetus,
Gyges and Hyperion, Phœbe, Tethys,
Thea and Rhea and Mnemosyne.
Then Saturn wedded Rhea, and begat
Pluto and Neptune, Jupiter and Juno."

CALLIDEMUS.

Very beautiful, and very natural; and, as you say, very like Euripides.

SPEUSIPPUS.

You are sneering. Really, father, you do not understand these things. You had not those advantages in your youth——

CALLIDEMUS.

Which I have been fool enough to let you have. No; in my early days, lying had not been dignified into a science, nor politics degraded into a trade. I wrestled, and read Homer's battles, instead of dressing my hair, and reciting lectures in verse out of Euripides. But I have some notion of what a play should be; I have seen Phrynichus, and lived with Æschylus. I saw the representation of the Persians.

SPEUSIPPUS.

A wretched play; it may amuse the fools who row the triremes; but it is utterly unworthy to be read by any man of taste.

CALLIDEMUS.

If you had seen it acted;—the whole theatre frantic with joy, stamping, shouting, laughing, crying. There was Cynægeirus, the brother of Æschylus, who lost both his arms at Marathon, beating the stumps against his sides with rapture. When the crowd remarked him—But where are you going?

SPEUSIPPUS.

To sup with Alcibiades ; he sails with the expedition for Sicily in a few days ; this is his farewell entertainment.

CALLIDEMUS.

So much the better ; I should say, so much the worse. That cursed Sicilian expedition ! And you were one of the young fools * who stood clapping and shouting while he was gulling the rabble, and who drowned poor Nicias's voice with your uproar. Look to it ; a day of reckoning will come. As to Alcibiades himself——

SPEUSIPPUS.

What can you say against him ? His enemies themselves acknowledge his merit.

CALLIDEMUS.

They acknowledge that he is clever, and handsome, and that he was crowned at the Olympic games. And what other merits do his friends claim for him ? A precious assembly you will meet at his house, no doubt.

SPEUSIPPUS.

The first men in Athens, probably.

CALLIDEMUS.

Whom do you mean by the first men in Athens ?

SPEUSIPPUS.

Callicles.†

CALLIDEMUS.

A sacrilegious, impious, unfeeling ruffian !

SPEUSIPPUS.

Hippomachus.

CALLIDEMUS.

A fool, who can talk of nothing but his travels through Persia and Egypt. Go, go. The gods forbid that I should detain you from such choice society !

[*Exeunt severally*

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* See Thucydides, vi. 13.

† Callicles plays a conspicuous part in the Gorgias of Plato.

II.

SCENE—*A Hall in the house of* ALCIBIADES.

ALCIBIADES, SPEUSIPPUS, CALLICLES, HIPPOMACHUS, CHARICLEA, *and others, seated round a table, feasting.*

ALCIBIADES.

Bring larger cups. This shall be our gayest revel. It is probably the last—for some of us at least.

SPEUSIPPUS.

At all events, it will be long before you taste such wine again, Alcibiades.

CALLICLES.

Nay, there is excellent wine in Sicily. When I was there with Eurymedon's squadron, I had many a long carouse. You never saw finer grapes than those of Ætna.

HIPPOMACHUS.

The Greeks do not understand the art of making wine. Your Persian is the man. So rich, so fragrant, so sparkling! I will tell you what the Satrap of Caria said to me about that when I supped with him.

ALCIBIADES.

Nay, sweet Hippomachus; not a word to-night about satraps, or the great king, or the walls of Babylon, or the Pyramids, or the mummies. Chariclea, why do you look so sad?

CHARICLEA.

Can I be cheerful when you are going to leave me, Alcibiades?

ALCIBIADES.

My life, my sweet soul, it is but for a short time. In a year we conquer Sicily. In another, we humble Carthage.* I will bring back such robes, such necklaces, elephants' teeth by thousands, ay, and the elephants themselves, if you wish to see them. Nay, smile, my Chariclea, or I shall talk nonsense to no purpose.

HIPPOMACHUS.

The largest elephant that I ever saw was in the grounds of Teribazus, near Susa. I wish that I had measured him.

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* See Thucydides, vi. 90.

ALCIBIADES.

I wish that he had trod upon you. Come, come, Chariclea, we shall soon return, and then——

CHARICLEA.

Yes; then indeed.

ALCIBIADES.

Yes, then—

Then for revels; then for dances,
Tender whispers, melting glances.
Peasants, pluck your richest fruits:
Minstrels, sound your sweetest flutes:
Come in laughing crowds to greet us,
Dark-eyed daughters of Miletus;
Bring the myrtles, bring the dice,
Floods of Chian, hills of spice.

SPEUSIPPUS.

Whose lines are those, Alcibiades?

ALCIBIADES.

My own. Think you, because I do not shut myself up to meditate, and drink water, and eat herbs, that I cannot write verses? By Apollo, if I did not spend my days in politics, and my nights in revelry, I should have made Sophocles tremble. But now I never go beyond a little song like this, and never invoke any Muse but Chariclea. But come, Speusippus, sing. You are a professed poet. Let us have some of your verses.

SPEUSIPPUS.

My verses! How can you talk so? I a professed poet!

ALCIBIADES.

Oh, content you, sweet Speusippus. We all know your designs upon the tragic honours. Come, sing. A chorus of your new play.

SPEUSIPPUS.

Nay, nay——

HIPPOMACHUS.

When a guest who is asked to sing at a Persian banquet refuses——

SPEUSIPPUS.

In the name of Bacchus——

ALCIBIADES.

I am absolute. Sing.

SPEUSIPPUS.

Well, then, I will sing you a chorus, which, I think, is a tolerable imitation of Euripides.

CHARICLEA.

Of Euripides?—Not a word.

ALCIBIADES.

Why so, sweet Chariclea?

CHARICLEA.

Would you have me betray my sex? Would you have me forget his Phædras and Sthenobœas? No: if I ever suffer any lines of that woman-hater, or his imitators, to be sung in my presence, may I sell herbs * like his mother, and wear rags like his Telephus. †

ALCIBIADES.

Then, sweet Chariclea, since you have silenced Speusippus, you shall sing yourself.

CHARICLEA.

What shall I sing?

ALCIBIADES.

Nay, choose for yourself.

CHARICLEA.

Then I will sing an old Ionian hymn, which is chanted every spring at the feast of Venus, near Miletus. I used to sing it in my own country when I was a child; and—ah, Alcibiades!

ALCIBIADES.

Dear Chariclea, you shall sing something else. This distresses you.

CHARICLEA.

No: hand me the lyre:—no matter. You will hear the song to disadvantage. But if it were sung as I have heard it sung:—if this were a beautiful morning in spring, and if we were standing on a woody promontory, with the sea, and the white sails, and the blue Cyclades beneath us,—and the portico of a temple peeping through the trees on a huge peak above our heads,—and thousands of people, with myrtles in

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* The mother of Euripides was a herb-woman. This was a favourite topic of Aristophanes.

† The hero of one of the lost plays of Euripides, who appears to have been brought upon the stage in the garb of a beggar. See Aristophanes; Acharn. 430; and in other places.

their hands, thronging up the winding path, their gay dresses and garlands disappearing and emerging by turns as they passed round the angles of the rock,—then perhaps——

ALCIBIADES.

Now, by Venus herself, sweet lady, where you are we shall lack neither sun, nor flowers, nor spring, nor temple, nor goddess.

CHARICLEA. (*Sings.*)

Let this sunny hour be given,
  Venus, unto love and mirth:
Smiles like thine are in the heaven;
  Bloom like thine is on the earth;
And the tinkling of the fountains,
  And the murmurs of the sea,
And the echoes from the mountains,
  Speak of youth, and hope, and thee.

By whate'er of soft expression
  Thou hast taught to lovers' eyes,
Faint denial, slow confession,
  Glowing cheeks and stifled sighs;
By the pleasure and the pain,
  By the follies and the wiles,
Pouting fondness, sweet disdain,
  Happy tears and mournful smiles;

Come with music floating o'er thee;
  Come with violets springing round:
Let the Graces dance before thee,
  All their golden zones unbound;
Now in sport their faces hiding,
  Now, with slender fingers fair,
From their laughing eyes dividing
  The long curls of rose-crowned hair.

ALCIBIADES.

Sweetly sung; but mournfully, Chariclea; for which I would chide you, but that I am sad myself. More wine there. I wish to all the gods that I had fairly sailed from Athens.

CHARICLEA.

And from me, Alcibiades?

ALCIBIADES.

Yes, from you, dear lady. The days which immediately precede separation are the most melancholy of our lives.

CHARICLEA.

Except those which immediately follow it.

ALCIBIADES.

No ; when I cease to see you, other objects may compel my attention ; but can I be near you without thinking how lovely you are, and how soon I must leave you?

HIPPOMACHUS.

Ay ; travelling soon puts such thoughts out of men's heads.

CALLICLES.

A battle is the best remedy for them.

CHARICLEA.

A battle, I should think, might supply their place with others as unpleasant.

CALLICLES.

No. The preparations are rather disagreeable to a novice. But as soon as the fighting begins, by Jupiter, it is a noble time ;—men trampling,—shields clashing,—spears breaking,—and the pœan roaring louder than all.

CHARICLEA.

But what if you are killed?

CALLICLES.

What indeed? You must ask Speusippus that question. He is a philosopher.

ALCIBIADES.

Yes, and the greatest of philosophers, if he can answer it.

SPEUSIPPUS.

Pythagoras is of opinion——

HIPPOMACHUS.

Pythagoras stole that and all his other opinions from Asia and Egypt. The transmigration of the soul and the vegetable diet are derived from India. I met a Brachman in Sogdiana——

CALLICLES.

All nonsense!

CHARICLEA.

What think you, Alcibiades?

ALCIBIADES.

I think that, if the doctrine be true, your spirit will be transfused into one of the doves who carry [*] ambrosia to the gods or verses to the mistresses of poets. Do you remember Anacreon's lines? How should you like such an office?

CHARICLEA.

If I were to be your dove, Alcibiades, and you would treat me as Anacreon treated his, and let me nestle in your breast and drink from your cup, I would submit even to carry your love-letters to other ladies.

CALLICLES.

What, in the name of Jupiter, is the use of all these speculations about death? Socrates once [†] lectured me upon it the best part of a day. I have hated the sight of him ever since. Such things may suit an old sophist when he is fasting; but in the midst of wine and music——

HIPPOMACHUS.

I differ from you. The enlightened Egyptians bring skeletons into their banquets, in order to remind their guests to make the most of their life while they have it.

CALLICLES.

I want neither skeleton nor sophist to teach me that lesson. More wine, I pray you, and less wisdom. If you must believe something which you never can know, why not be contented with the long stories about the other world which are told us when we are initiated at the Eleusinian mysteries? [‡]

CHARICLEA.

And what are those stories?

ALCIBIADES.

Are not you initiated, Chariclea?

CHARICLEA.

No; my mother was a Lydian, a barbarian; and therefore——

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[*] Homer's Odyssey, xii. 63.

[†] See the close of Plato's Gorgias.

[‡] The scene which follows is founded upon history. Thucydides tells us, in his sixth book, that about this time Alcibiades was suspected of having assisted at a mock celebration of these famous mysteries. It was the opinion of the vulgar among the Athenians that extraordinary privileges were granted in the other world to all who had been initiated.

ALCIBIADES.

I understand. Now the curse of Venus on the fools who made so hateful a law! Speusippus, does not your friend Euripides * say

"The land where thou art prosperous is thy country?"

Surely we ought to say to every lady

"The land where thou art pretty is thy country."

Besides, to exclude foreign beauties from the chorus of the initiated in the Elysian fields is less cruel to them than to ourselves. Chariclea, you shall be initiated.

CHARICLEA.

When?

ALCIBIADES.

Now.

CHARICLEA.

Where?

ALCIBIADES.

Here.

CHARICLEA.

Delightful!

SPEUSIPPUS.

But there must be an interval of a year between the purification and the initiation.

ALCIBIADES.

We will suppose all that.

SPEUSIPPUS.

And nine days of rigid mortification of the senses.

ALCIBIADES.

We will suppose that too. I am sure it was supposed, with as little reason, when I was initiated.

SPEUSIPPUS.

But you are sworn to secrecy.

ALCIBIADES.

You a sophist, and talk of oaths! You a pupil of Euripides, and forget his maxims!

"My lips have sworn it; but my mind is free." †

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* The right of Euripides to this line is somewhat disputable. See Aristophanes; Plutus, 1152.

† See Euripides; Hippolytus, 608. For the jesuitical morality of this line Euripides is bitterly attacked by the comic poet.

SPEUSIPPUS.

But Alcibiades——

ALCIBIADES.

What! Are you afraid of Ceres and Proserpine?

SPEUSIPPUS.

No—but—but—I—that is I—but it is best to be safe—I mean—Suppose there should be something in it.

ALCIBIADES.

Now, by Mercury, I shall die with laughing. O Speusippus, Speusippus! Go back to your old father. Dig vineyards, and judge causes, and be a respectable citizen. But never, while you live, again dream of being a philosopher.

SPEUSIPPUS.

Nay, I was only——

ALCIBIADES.

A pupil of Gorgias and Melesigenes afraid of Tartarus! In what region of the infernal world do you expect your domicile to be fixed? Shall you roll a stone like Sisyphus? Hard exercise, Speusippus!

SPEUSIPPUS.

In the name of all the gods——

ALCIBIADES.

Or shall you sit starved and thirsty in the midst of fruit and wine like Tantalus? Poor fellow? I think I see your face as you are springing up to the branches and missing your aim. Oh Bacchus! Oh Mercury!

SPEUSIPPUS.

Alcibiades!

ALCIBIADES.

Or perhaps you will be food for a vulture, like the huge fellow who was rude to Latona.

SPEUSIPPUS.

Alcibiades!

ALCIBIADES.

Never fear. Minos will not be so cruel. Your eloquence will triumph over all accusations. The Furies will skulk away like disappointed sycophants. Only address the judges of hell in the speech which you were prevented from speaking last assembly. "When I consider"—is not that the beginning of it? Come, man, do not be angry. Why do you pace up and down with such long steps? You are not in Tartarus yet. You seem to think that you are already stalking like poor Achilles,

"With stride
Majestic through the plain of Asphodel."[*]

SPEUSIPPUS.

How can you talk so, when you know that I believe all that foolery as little as you do?

ALCIBIADES.

Then march. You shall be the crier.[†] Callicles, you shall carry the torch. Why do you stare?

CALLICLES.

I do not much like the frolic.

ALCIBIADES.

Nay, surely you are not taken with a fit of piety. If all be true that is told of you, you have as little reason to think the gods vindictive as any man breathing. If you be not belied, a certain golden goblet which I have seen at your house was once in the temple of Juno at Corcyra. And men say that there was a priestess at Tarentum——

CALLICLES.

A fig for the gods! I was thinking about the Archons. You will have an accusation laid against you to-morrow. It is not very pleasant to be tried before the king.[‡]

ALCIBIADES.

Never fear: there is not a sycophant in Attica who would dare to breathe a word against me, for the golden [§] plane-tree of the great king.

HIPPOMACHUS.

That plane-tree ——

ALCIBIADES.

Never mind the plane-tree. Come, Callicles, you were not so timid when you plundered the merchantman off Cape Malea. Take up the torch and move. Hippomachus, tell one of the slaves to bring a sow.[‖]

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[*] See Homer's Odyssey, xi. 538.

[†] The crier and torchbearer were important functionaries at the celebration of the Eleusinian mysteries.

[‡] The name of king was given in the Athenian democracy to the magistrate who exercised those spiritual functions which in the monarchical times had belonged to the sovereign. His court took cognisance of offences against the religion of the state.

[§] See Herodotus, viii. 28.

[‖] A sow was sacrificed to Ceres at the admission to the greater mysteries.

CALLICLES.

And what part are you to play?

ALCIBIADES.

I shall be hierophant. Herald, to your office. Torchbearer, advance with the lights. Come forward, fair novice. We will celebrate the rite within. (*Exeunt.*)

CRITICISMS ON THE PRINCIPAL ITALIAN WRITERS.

No. I. DANTE. (JANUARY 1824.)

> "Fairest of stars, last in the train of night,
> If better thou belong not to the dawn,
> Sure pledge of day, that crown'st the smiling morn
> With thy bright circlet." MILTON.

IN a review of Italian literature, Dante has a double claim to precedency. He was the earliest and the greatest writer of his country. He was the first man who fully descried and exhibited the powers of his native dialect. The Latin tongue, which, under the most favourable circumstances, and in the hands of the greatest masters, had still been poor, feeble, and singularly unpoetical, and which had, in the age of Dante, been debased by the admixture of innumerable barbarous words and idioms, was still cultivated with superstitious veneration, and received, in the last stage of corruption, more honours than it had deserved in the period of its life and vigour. It was the language of the cabinet, of the university, of the church. It was employed by all who aspired to distinction in the higher walks of poetry. In compassion to the ignorance of his mistress, a cavalier might now and then proclaim his passion in Tuscan or Provençal rhymes. The vulgar might occasionally be edified by a pious allegory in the popular jargon. But no writer had conceived it possible that the dialect of peasants and market-women should possess sufficient energy and precision for a majestic and durable work. Dante adventured first. He detected the rich treasures of thought and diction which still lay latent in their ore. He refined them into purity. He burnished them into splendour. He fitted them for every purpose of use and magnificence. And he has thus acquired the glory, not only of producing the finest narrative poem of modern times but also of creating a language, distinguished by unrivalled melody, and peculiarly capable of furnishing to lofty and passionate thoughts their appropriate garb of severe and concise expression.

To many this may appear a singular panegyric on the Italian tongue. Indeed the great majority of the young gentlemen and young ladies, who, when they are asked whether they read Italian, answer "yes," never go beyond the stories at the end of their grammar,—The Pastor Fido,—or an act of Artaserse. They could as soon read a Babylonian brick as a canto of Dante. Hence it is a general opinion, among those who know little or nothing of the subject, that this admirable language is adapted only to the effeminate cant of sonnetteers, musicians, and connoisseurs.

The fact is that Dante and Petrarch have been the Oromasdes and Arimanes of Italian literature. I wish not to detract from the merits of Petrarch. No one can doubt that his poems exhibit, amidst some imbecility and more affectation, much elegance, ingenuity, and tenderness. They present us with a mixture which can only be compared to the whimsical concert described by the humorous poet of Modena:

> "S' udian gli usignuoli, al primo albore,
> E gli asini cantar versi d'amore."*

I am not, however, at present speaking of the intrinsic excellencies of his writings, which I shall take another opportunity to examine, but of the effect which they produced on the literature of Italy. The florid and luxurious charms of his style enticed the poets and the public from the contemplation of nobler and sterner models. In truth, though a rude state of society is that in which great original works are most frequently produced, it is also that in which they are worst appreciated. This may appear paradoxical; but it is proved by experience, and is consistent with reason. To be without any received canons of taste is good for the few who can create, but bad for the many who can only imitate and judge. Great and active minds cannot remain at rest. In a cultivated age they are too often contented to move on in the beaten path. But where no path exists they will make one. Thus the Iliad, the Odyssey, the Divine Comedy, appeared in dark and half barbarous times: and thus of the few original works which have been produced in more polished ages we owe a large proportion to men in low stations and of uninformed minds. I will instance, in our own language, the Pilgrim's Progress and Robinson Crusoe. Of all the prose works of fiction which we possess, these are, I will not say the best, but the most peculiar, the most unprecedented, the most inimitable. Had Bunyan and Defoe been educated gentlemen, they would probably have published translations and imitations of French romances "by a person of quality." I am not sure that we should have had Lear if Shakspeare had been able to read Sophocles.

But these circumstances, while they foster genius, are unfavourable to the science of criticism. Men judge by comparison. They are unable to estimate the grandeur of an object when there is no standard by which they can measure it. One of the French philosophers (I beg Gerard's pardon), who accompanied Napoleon to Egypt, tells us that, when he first visited the great Pyramid, he was surprised to see it so diminutive. It stood alone in a boundless plain. There was nothing near it from which he could calculate its magnitude. But when the camp was pitched beside it, and the tents appeared like diminutive specks around its base, he then perceived the immensity of this mightiest work of man. In the same manner, it is not till a crowd of petty writers has sprung up that the merit of the great masterspirits of literature is understood.

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* Tassoni; Secchia Rapita, canto i. stanza 6.

We have indeed ample proof that Dante was highly admired in his own and the following age. I wish that we had equal proof that he was admired for his excellencies. But it is a remarkable corroboration of what has been said, that this great man seems to have been utterly unable to appreciate himself. In his treatise *De Vulgari Eloquentia* he talks with satisfaction of what he has done for Italian literature, of the purity and correctness of his style. "*Cependant,*" says a favourite* writer of mine, "*il n'est ni pur, ni correct, mais il est créateur.*" Considering the difficulties with which Dante had to struggle, we may perhaps be more inclined than the French critic to allow him this praise. Still it is by no means his highest or most peculiar title to applause. It is scarcely necessary to say that those qualities which escaped the notice of the poet himself were not likely to attract the attention of the commentators. The fact is, that, while the public homage was paid to some absurdities with which his works may be justly charged, and to many more which were falsely imputed to them,—while lecturers were paid to expound and eulogise his physics, his metaphysics, his theology, all bad of their kind,—while annotators laboured to detect allegorical meanings of which the author never dreamed, the great powers of his imagination, and the incomparable force of his style, were neither admired nor imitated. Arimanes had prevailed. The Divine Comedy was to that age what St. Paul's Cathedral was to Omai. The poor Otaheitean stared listlessly for a moment at the huge cupola, and ran into a toyshop to play with beads. Italy, too, was charmed with literary trinkets, and played with them for four centuries.

From the time of Petrarch to the appearance of Alfieri's tragedies, we may trace in almost every page of Italian literature the influence of those celebrated sonnets which, from the nature both of their beauties and their faults, were peculiarly unfit to be models for general imitation. Almost all the poets of that period, however different in the degree and quality of their talents, are characterised by great exaggeration, and as a necessary consequence, great coldness of sentiment; by a passion for frivolous and tawdry ornament; and, above all, by an extreme feebleness and diffuseness of style. Tasso, Marino, Guarini, Metastasio, and a crowd of writers of inferior merit and celebrity, were spell-bound in the enchanted gardens of a gaudy and meretricious Alcina, who concealed debility and deformity beneath the deceitful semblance of loveliness and health. Ariosto, the great Ariosto himself, like his own Ruggiero, stooped for a time to linger amidst the magic flowers and fountains, and to caress the gay and painted sorceress. But to him, as to his own Ruggiero, had been given the omnipotent ring and the winged courser, which bore him from the paradise of deception to the regions of light and nature.

The evil of which I speak was not confined to the graver poets. It infected satire, comedy, burlesque. No person can admire more than I do the great masterpieces of wit and humour which Italy has produced. Still I cannot but discern and lament a great deficiency, which is common to them all. I find in them abundance of ingenuity, of droll naïveté, of profound and just reflection, of happy expression. Manners, characters, opinions, are treated with "a most learned spirit of human dealing." But something is still wanting. We read, and we admire, and we yawn. We look in vain for the bacchanalian fury which inspired the comedy of

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* Sismondi, Littérature du Midi de l'Europe.

Athens, for the fierce and withering scorn which animates the invectives of Juvenal and Dryden, or even for the compact and pointed diction which adds zest to the verses of Pope and Boileau. There is no enthusiasm, no energy, no condensation, nothing which springs from strong feeling, nothing which tends to excite it. Many fine thoughts and fine expressions reward the toil of reading. Still it is a toil. The Secchia Rapita, in some points the best poem of its kind, is painfully diffuse and languid. The Animali Parlanti of Casti is perfectly intolerable. I admire the dexterity of the plot, and the liberality of the opinions. I admit that it is impossible to turn to a page which does not contain something that deserves to be remembered; but it is at least six times as long as it ought to be. And the garrulous feebleness of the style is a still greater fault than the length of the work.

It may be thought that I have gone too far in attributing these evils to the influence of the works and the fame of Petrarch. It cannot, however, be doubted that they have arisen, in a great measure, from a neglect of the style of Dante. This is not more proved by the decline of Italian poetry then by its resuscitation. After the lapse of four hundred and fifty years, there appeared a man capable of appreciating and imitating the father of Tuscan literature—Vittorio Alfieri. Like the prince in the nursery tale, he sought and found the sleeping beauty within the recesses which had so long concealed her from mankind. The portal was indeed rusted by time;—the dust of ages had accumulated on the hangings;—the furniture was of antique fashion;—and the gorgeous colour of the embroidery had faded. But the living charms which were well worth all the rest remained in the bloom of eternal youth, and well rewarded the bold adventurer who roused them from their long slumber. In every line of the Philip and the Saul, the greatest poems, I think, of the eighteenth century, we may trace the influence of that mighty genius which has immortalised the ill-starred love of Francesca, and the paternal agonies of Ugolino. Alfieri bequeathed the sovereignty of Italian literature to the author of the Aristodemus—a man of genius scarcely inferior to his own, and a still more devoted disciple of the great Florentine. It must be acknowledged that this eminent writer has sometimes pushed too far his idolatry of Dante. To borrow a sprightly illustration from Sir John Denham, he has not only imitated his garb, but borrowed his clothes. He often quotes his phrases; and he has, not very judiciously as it appears to me, imitated his versification. Nevertheless, he has displayed many of the higher excellencies of his master; and his works may justly inspire us with a hope that the Italian language will long flourish under a new literary dynasty, or rather under the legitimate line, which has at length been restored to a throne long occupied by specious usurpers.

The man to whom the literature of his country owes its origin and its revival was born in times singularly adapted to call forth his extraordinary powers. Religious zeal, chivalrous love and honour, democratic liberty, are the three most powerful principles that have ever influenced the character of large masses of men. Each of them singly has often excited the greatest enthusiasm, and produced the most important changes. In the time of Dante all the three, often in amalgamation, generally in conflict, agitated the public mind. The preceding generation had witnessed the wrongs and the revenge of the brave, the accomplished, the unfortunate Emperor Frederic the Second,—a poet in an age of schoolmen,—a philosopher in an age of monks,—a statesman in an age of crusaders.

During the whole life of the poet, Italy was experiencing the consequences of the memorable struggle which he had maintained against the Church. The finest works of imagination have always been produced in times of political convulsion, as the richest vineyards and the sweetest flowers always grow on the soil which has been fertilised by the fiery deluge of a volcano. To look no further than the literary history of our own country, can we doubt that Shakspeare was in a great measure produced by the Reformation, and Wordsworth by the French Revolution? Poets often avoid political transactions; they often affect to despise them. But, whether they perceive it or not, they must be influenced by them. As long as their minds have any point of contact with those of their fellow-men, the electric impulse, at whatever distance it may originate, will be circuitously communicated to them.

This will be the case even in large societies, where the division of labour enables many speculative men to observe the face of nature, or to analyse their own minds, at a distance from the seat of political transactions. In the little republic of which Dante was a member the state of things was very different. These small communities are most unmercifully abused by most of our modern professors of the science of government. In such states, they tell us, factions are always most violent: where both parties are cooped up within a narrow space, political difference necessarily produces personal malignity. Every man must be a soldier; every moment may produce a war. No citizen can lie down secure that he shall not be roused by the alarum-bell, to repel or avenge an injury. In such petty quarrels Greece squandered the blood which might have purchased for her the permanent empire of the world, and Italy wasted the energy and the abilities which would have enabled her to defend her independence against the Pontiffs and the Cæsars.

All this is true: yet there is still a compensation. Mankind has not derived so much benefit from the empire of Rome as from the city of Athens, nor from the kingdom of France as from the city of Florence. The violence of party feeling may be an evil; but it calls forth that activity of mind which in some states of society it is desirable to produce at any expense. Universal soldiership may be an evil; but where every man is a soldier there will be no standing army. And is it no evil that one man in every fifty should be bred to the trade of slaughter; should live only by destroying and by exposing himself to be destroyed; should fight without enthusiasm and conquer without glory; be sent to a hospital when wounded, and rot on a dunghill when old? Such, over more than two-thirds of Europe, is the fate of soldiers. It was something that the citizen of Milan or Florence fought, not merely in the vague and rhetorical sense in which the words are often used, but in sober truth, for his parents, his children, his lands, his house, his altars. It was something that he marched forth to battle beneath the Carroccio, which had been the object of his childish veneration: that his aged father looked down from the battlements on his exploits; that his friends and his rivals were the witnesses of his glory. If he fell, he was consigned to no venal or heedless guardians. The same day saw him conveyed within the walls which he had defended. His wounds were dressed by his mother; his confession was whispered to the friendly priest who had heard and absolved the follies of his youth; his last sigh was breathed upon the lips of the lady of his love. Surely there is no sword like that which is beaten out of a ploughshare. Surely this state of things was not unmixedly bad; its evils were alleviated by enthusiasm and by tenderness; and it will at least be acknowledged that it was well fitted to nurse poetical genius in an imaginative and observant mind.

Nor did the religious spirit of the age tend less to this result than its political circumstances. Fanaticism is an evil, but it is not the greatest of evils. It is good that a people should be roused by any means from a state of utter torpor;—that their minds should be diverted from objects merely sensual, to meditations, however erroneous, on the mysteries of the moral and intellectual world; and from interests which are immediately selfish to those which relate to the past, the future, and the remote. These effects have sometimes been produced by the worst superstitions that ever existed; but the Catholic religion, even in the time of its utmost extravagance and atrocity, never wholly lost the spirit of the Great Teacher, whose precepts form the noblest code, as His conduct furnished the purest example, of moral excellence. It is of all religions the most poetical. The ancient superstitions furnished the fancy with beautiful images, but took no hold on the heart. The doctrines of the Reformed Churches have most powerfully influenced the feelings and the conduct of men, but have not presented them with visions of sensible beauty and grandeur. The Roman Catholic Church has united to the awful doctrines of the one what Mr Coleridge calls the "fair humanities" of the other. It has enriched sculpture and painting with the loveliest and most majestic forms. To the Phidian Jupiter it can oppose the Moses of Michael Angelo; and to the voluptuous beauty of the Queen of Cyprus, the serene and pensive loveliness of the Virgin Mother. The legends of its martyrs and its saints may vie in ingenuity and interest with the mythological fables of Greece; its ceremonies and processions were the delight of the vulgar; the huge fabric of secular power with which it was connected attracted the admiration of the statesman. At the same time, it never lost sight of the most solemn and tremendous doctrines of Christianity,—the incarnate God,—the judgment,—the retribution,—the eternity of happiness or torment. Thus, while, like the ancient religions, it received incalculable support from policy and ceremony, it never wholly became, like those religions, a merely political and ceremonial institution. ✓

The beginning of the thirteenth century was, as Machiavelli has remarked, the era of a great revival of this extraordinary system. The policy of Innocent,—the growth of the Inquisition and the mendicant orders,—the wars against the Albigenses, the Pagans of the East, and the unfortunate princes of the house of Swabia, agitated Italy during the two following generations. In this point Dante was completely under the influence of his age. He was a man of a turbid and melancholy spirit. In early youth he had entertained a strong and unfortunate passion, which, long after the death of her whom he loved, continued to haunt him. Dissipation, ambition, misfortunes had not effaced it. He was not only a sincere, but a passionate, believer. The crimes and abuses of the Church of Rome were indeed loathsome to him; but to all its doctrines and all its rites he adhered with enthusiastic fondness and veneration; and, at length, driven from his native country, reduced to a situation the most painful to a man of his disposition, condemned to learn by experience that no * food is so bitter as the bread of dependence, and

* "Tu proverai si come sa di sale
Lo pane altrui, e come é duro calle
Lo scendere e 'l salir per l' altrui scale."
Paradiso, canto xvii.

no ascent so painful as the staircase of a patron,—his wounded spirit took refuge in visionary devotion. Beatrice, the unforgotten object of his early tenderness, was invested by his imagination with glorious and mysterious attributes ; she was enthroned among the highest of the celestial hierarchy : Almighty Wisdom had assigned to her the care of the sinful and unhappy wanderer who had loved her with such a perfect love.* By a confusion, like that which often takes place in dreams, he has sometimes lost sight of her human nature, and even of her personal existence, and seems to consider her as one of the attributes of the Deity.

But those religious hopes which had released the mind of the sublime enthusiast from the terrors of death had not rendered his speculations on human life more cheerful. This is an inconsistency which may often be observed in men of a similar temperament. He hoped for happiness beyond the grave : but he felt none on earth. It is from this cause, more than from any other, that his description of Heaven is so far inferior to the Hell or the Purgatory. With the passions and miseries of the suffering spirits he feels a strong sympathy. But among the beatified he appears as one who has nothing in common with them,—as one who is incapable of comprehending, not only the degree, but the nature of their enjoyment. We think that we see him standing amidst those smiling and radiant spirits with that scowl of unutterable misery on his brow, and that curl of bitter disdain on his lips, which all his portraits have preserved, and which might furnish Chantrey with hints for the head of his projected Satan.

There is no poet whose intellectual and moral character are so closely connected. The great source, as it appears to me, of the power of the Divine Comedy is the strong belief with which the story seems to be told. In this respect, the only books which approach to its excellence are Gulliver's Travels and Robinson Crusoe. The solemnity of his asseverations, the consistency and minuteness of his details, the earnestness with which he labours to make the reader understand the exact shape and size of everything that he describes, give an air of reality to his wildest fictions. I should only weaken this statement by quoting instances of a feeling which pervades the whole work, and to which it owes much of its fascination. This is the real justification of the many passages in his poem which bad critics have condemned as grotesque. I am concerned to see that Mr Cary, to whom Dante owes more than ever poet owed to translator, has sanctioned an accusation utterly unworthy of his abilities. "His solicitude," says that gentleman, "to define all his images in such a manner as to bring them within the circle of our vision, and to subject them to the power of the pencil, renders him little better than grotesque, where Milton has since taught us to expect sublimity." It is true that Dante has never shrunk from embodying his conceptions in determinate words, that he has even given measures and numbers, where Milton would have left his images to float undefined in a gorgeous haze of language. Both were right. Milton did not profess to have been in heaven or hell. He might therefore reasonably confine himself to magnificent generalities. Far different was the office of the lonely traveller, who had wandered through the nations of the dead. Had he described the abode of the rejected spirits in language resembling the splendid lines of the English Poet,—had he told us of—

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* "L'amico mio, e non della ventura."
Inferno, canto ii.

"An universe of death, which God by curse
Created evil, for evil only good,
Where all life dies, death lives, and Nature breeds
Perverse all monstrous, all prodigious things,
Abominable, unutterable, and worse
Than fables yet have feigned, or fear conceived,
Gorgons, and hydras, and chimæras dire"—

this would doubtless have been noble writing. But where would have been that strong impression of reality, which, in accordance with his plan, it should have been his great object to produce? It was absolutely necessary for him to delineate accurately "all monstrous, all prodigious things,"—to utter what might to others appear "unutterable,"—to relate with the air of truth what fables had never feigned,—to embody what fear had never conceived. And I will frankly confess that the vague sublimity of Milton affects me less than these reviled details of Dante. We read Milton; and we know that we are reading a great poet. When we read Dante, the poet vanishes. We are listening to the man who has returned from "the valley of the dolorous abyss;"*—we seem to see the dilated eye of horror, to hear the shuddering accents with which he tells his fearful tale. Considered in this light, the narratives are exactly what they should be,—definite in themselves, but suggesting to the mind ideas of awful and indefinite wonder. They are made up of the images of the earth:—they are told in the language of the earth.—Yet the whole effect is, beyond expression, wild and unearthly. The fact is, that supernatural beings, as long as they are considered merely with reference to their own nature, excite our feelings very feebly. It is when the great gulf which separates them from us is passed, when we suspect some strange and undefinable relation between the laws of the visible and the invisible world, that they rouse, perhaps, the strongest emotions of which our nature is capable. How many children, and how many men, are afraid of ghosts, who are not afraid of God! And this, because, though they entertain a much stronger conviction of the existence of a Deity than of the reality of apparitions, they have no apprehension that he will manifest himself to them in any sensible manner. While this is the case, to describe superhuman beings in the language, and to attribute to them the actions, of humanity may be grotesque, unphilosophical, inconsistent; but it will be the only mode of working upon the feelings of men, and, therefore, the only mode suited for poetry. Shakspeare understood this well, as he understood everything that belonged to his art. Who does not sympathise with the rapture of Ariel, flying after sunset on the wings of the bat, or sucking in the cups of flowers with the bee? Who does not shudder at the caldron of Macbeth? Where is the philosopher who is not moved when he thinks of the strange connection between the infernal spirits and "the sow's blood that hath eaten her nine farrow?" But this difficult task of representing supernatural beings to our minds, in a manner which shall be neither unintelligible to our intellects nor wholly inconsistent with our ideas of their nature, has never been so well performed as by Dante. I will refer to three instances, which are, perhaps, the most striking:—the description of the transformations of the serpents and the robbers, in the twenty-fifth canto of the Inferno,—the passage concerning Nimrod, in the thirty-first canto of the same part,—and the magnificent procession in the twenty-ninth canto of the Purgatorio.

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* "La valle d'abisso doloroso."—*Inferno*, canto iv.

The metaphors and comparisons of Dante harmonise admirably with that air of strong reality of which I have spoken. They have a very peculiar character. He is perhaps the only poet whose writings would become much less intelligible if all illustrations of this sort were expunged. His similes are frequently rather those of a traveller than of a poet. He employs them not to display his ingenuity by fanciful analogies,—not to delight the reader by affording him a distant and passing glimpse of beautiful images remote from the path in which he is proceeding, but to give an exact idea of the objects which he is describing, by comparing them with others generally known. The boiling pitch in Malebolge was like that in the Venetian arsenal:—the mound on which he travelled along the banks of Phlegethon was like that between Ghent and Bruges, but not so large:—the cavities where the Simoniacal prelates are confined resemble the Fonts in the Church of John at Florence. Every reader of Dante will recall many other illustrations of this description, which add to the appearance of sincerity and earnestness from which the narrative derives so much of its interest.

Many of his comparisons, again, are intended to give an exact idea of his feelings under particular circumstances. The delicate shades of grief, of fear, of anger, are rarely discriminated with sufficient accuracy in the language of the most refined nations. A rude dialect never abounds in nice distinctions of this kind. Dante therefore employs the most accurate and infinitely the most poetical mode of marking the precise state of his mind. Every person who has experienced the bewildering effect of sudden bad tidings,—the stupefaction,—the vague doubt of the truth of our own perceptions which they produce,—will understand the following simile:—"I was as he is who dreameth his own harm,—who, dreaming, wishes that it may be all a dream, so that he desires that which is as though it were not." This is only one out of a hundred equally striking and expressive similitudes. The comparisons of Homer and Milton are magnificent digressions. It scarcely injures their effect to detach them from the work. Those of Dante are very different. They derive their beauty from the context, and reflect beauty upon it. His embroidery cannot be taken out without spoiling the whole web. I cannot dismiss this part of the subject without advising every person who can muster sufficient Italian to read the simile of the sheep, in the third canto of the Purgatorio. I think it the most perfect passage of the kind in the world, the most imaginative, the most picturesque, and the most sweetly expressed.

No person can have attended to the Divine Comedy without observing how little impression the forms of the external world appear to have made on the mind of Dante. His temper and his situation had led him to fix his observation almost exclusively on human nature. The exquisite opening of the eighth[*] canto of the Purgatorio affords a strong instance of this. He leaves to others the earth, the ocean, and the sky. His

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[*] I cannot help observing that Gray's imitation of that noble line

"Che paia 'lgiorna pianger che si muore,"—

is one of the most striking instances of injudicious plagiarism with which I am acquainted. Dante did not put this strong personification at the beginning of his description. The imagination of the reader is so well prepared for it by the previous lines, that it appears perfectly natural and pathetic. Placed as Gray has placed it, neither business is with man. To other writers, evening may be the season of dews and stars and radiant clouds. To Dante it is the hour of fond recollection and passionate devotion,—the hour which melts the heart of the mariner and kindles the love of the pilgrim,—the hour when the toll of the bell seems to mourn for another day which is gone and will return no more.

The feeling of the present age has taken a direction diametrically opposite. The magnificence of the physical world, and its influence upon the human mind, have been the favourite themes of our most eminent poets. The herd of bluestocking ladies and sonneteering gentlemen seem to consider a strong sensibility to the "splendour of the grass, the glory of the flower," as an ingredient absolutely indispensable in the formation of a poetical mind. They treat with contempt all writers who are unfortunately

nec ponere lucum
Artifices, nec rus saturum laudare.

The orthodox poetical creed is more Catholic. The noblest earthly object of the contemplation of man is man himself. The universe, and all its fair and glorious forms, are indeed included in the wide empire of the imagination; but she has placed her home and her sanctuary amidst the inexhaustible varieties and the impenetrable mysteries of the mind.

In tutte parti impera, e quivi regge;
Quivi è la sua cittade, e l'alto seggio.*

Othello is perhaps the greatest work in the world. From what does it derive its power? From the clouds? From the ocean? From the mountains? Or from love strong as death, and jealousy cruel as the grave? What is it that we go forth to see in Hamlet? Is it a reed shaken with the wind? A small celandine? A bed of daffodils? Or is it to contemplate a mighty and wayward mind laid bare before us to the inmost recesses? It may perhaps be doubted whether the lakes and the hills are better fitted for the education of a poet than the dusky streets of a huge capital. Indeed who is not tired to death with pure description of scenery? Is it not the fact, that external objects never strongly excite our feelings but when they are contemplated in reference to man, as illustrating his destiny, or as influencing his character? The most beautiful object in the world, it will be allowed, is a beautiful woman. But who that can analyse his feelings is not sensible that she owes her fascination less to grace of outline and delicacy of colour, than to a thousand associations which, often unperceived by ourselves, connect those qualities with the source of our existence, with the nourishment of our infancy, with the passions of our youth, with the hopes of our age—with elegance, with vivacity, with tenderness, with the strongest of natural instincts, with the dearest of social ties?

To those who think thus, the insensibility of the Florentine poet to the

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preceded nor followed by anything that harmonises with it, it becomes a frigid conceit. Woe to the unskilful rider who ventures on the horses of Achilles!

οἱ δ’ ἀλεγεινοὶ
ἀνδράσι γε θνητοῖσι δαμήμεναι ἠδ’ ὀχέεσθαι,
ἄλλῳ γ’ ἢ Ἀχιλῆϊ τὸν ἀθανάτη τέκε μήτηρ.

* Inferno, canto 1.

beauties of nature will not appear an unpardonable deficiency. On mankind no writer, with the exception of Shakspeare, has looked with a more penetrating eye. I have said that his poetical character had derived a tinge from his peculiar temper. It is on the sterner and darker passions that he delights to dwell. All love excepting the half-mystic passion which he still felt for his buried Beatrice, had palled on the fierce and restless exile. The sad story of Rimini is almost a single exception. I know not whether it has been remarked, that, in one point, misanthropy seems to have affected his mind, as it did that of Swift. Nauseous and revolting images seem to have had a fascination for his mind; and he repeatedly places before his readers, with all the energy of his incomparable style, the most loathsome objects of the sewer and the dissecting-room.

There is another peculiarity in the poem of Dante, which, I think, deserves notice. Ancient mythology has hardly ever been successfully interwoven with modern poetry. One class of writers have introduced the fabulous deities merely as allegorical representatives of love, wine, or wisdom. This necessarily renders their works tame and cold. We may sometimes admire their ingenuity; but with what interest can we read of beings of whose personal existence the writer does not suffer us to entertain, for a moment, even a conventional belief? Even Spenser's allegory is scarcely tolerable, till we contrive to forget that Una signifies innocence, and consider her merely as an oppressed lady under the protection of a generous knight.

Those writers who have, more judiciously, attempted to preserve the personality of the classical divinities have failed from a different cause. They have been imitators, and imitators at a disadvantage. Euripides and Catullus believed in Bacchus and Cybele as little as we do. But they lived among men who did. Their imaginations, if not their opinions, took the colour of the age. Hence the glorious inspiration of the Bacchæ and the Atys. Our minds are formed by circumstances: and I do not believe that it would be in the power of the greatest modern poet to lash himself up to a degree of enthusiasm adequate to the production of such works.

Dante, alone among the poets of later times, has been, in this respect, neither an allegorist nor an imitator; and, consequently, he alone has introduced the ancient fictions with effect. His Minos, his Charon, his Pluto, are absolutely terrific. Nothing can be more beautiful or original than the use which he has made of the River of Lethe. He has never assigned to his mythological characters any functions inconsistent with the creed of the Catholic Church. He has related nothing concerning them which a good Christian of that age might not believe possible. On this account there is nothing in these passages that appears puerile or pedantic. On the contrary, this singular use of classical names suggests to the mind a vague and awful idea of some mysterious revelation, anterior to all recorded history, of which the dispersed fragments might have been retained amidst the impostures and superstitions of later religions. Indeed the mythology of the Divine Comedy is of the elder and more colossal mould. It breathes the spirit of Homer and Æschylus, not of Ovid and Claudian.

This is the more extraordinary, since Dante seems to have been utterly ignorant of the Greek language; and his favourite Latin models could only have served to mislead him. Indeed, it is impossible not to remark his admiration of writers far inferior to himself; and, in particular, his idolatry of Virgil, who, elegant and splendid as he is, has no pretensions to the depth and originality of mind which characterise his Tuscan worshipper. In truth it may be laid down as an almost universal rule that good poets are bad critics. Their minds are under the tyranny of ten thousand associations imperceptible to others. The worst writer may easily happen to touch a spring which is connected in their minds with a long succession of beautiful images. They are like the gigantic slaves of Aladdin, gifted with matchless power, but bound by spells so mighty that when a child whom they could have crushed touched a talisman, of whose secret he was ignorant, they immediately became his vassals. It has more than once happened to me to see minds, graceful and majestic as the Titania of Shakspeare, bewitched by the charms of an ass's head, bestowing on it the fondest caresses, and crowning it with the sweetest flowers. I need only mention the poems attributed to Ossian. They are utterly worthless, except as an edifying instance of the success of a story without evidence, and of a book without merit. They are a chaos of words which present no image, of images which have no archetype:—they are without form and void; and darkness is upon the face of them. Yet how many men of genius have panegyrised and imitated them!

The style of Dante is, if not his highest, perhaps his most peculiar excellence. I know nothing with which it can be compared. The noblest models of Greek composition must yield to it. His words are the fewest and the best which it is possible to use. The first expression in which he clothes his thoughts is always so energetic and comprehensive that amplification would only injure the effect. There is probably no writer in any language who has presented so many strong pictures to the mind. Yet there is probably no writer equally concise. This perfection of style is the principal merit of the Paradiso, which, as I have already remarked, is by no means equal in other respects to the two preceding parts of the poem. The force and felicity of the diction, however, irresistibly attract the reader through the theological lectures and the sketches of ecclesiastical biography, with which this division of the work too much abounds. It may seem almost absurd to quote particular specimens of an excellence which is diffused over all his hundred cantos. I will, however, instance the third canto of the Inferno, and the sixth of the Purgatorio, as passages incomparable in their kind. The merit of the latter is, perhaps, rather oratorical than poetical; nor can I recollect anything in the great Athenian speeches which equals it in force of invective and bitterness of sarcasm. I have heard the most eloquent statesman of the age remark that, next to Demosthenes, Dante is the writer who ought to be most attentively studied by every man who desires to attain oratorical eminence.

But it is time to close this feeble and rambling critique. I cannot refrain, however, from saying a few words upon the translations of the Divine Comedy. Boyd's is as tedious and languid as the original is rapid and forcible. The strange measure which he has chosen, and, for aught I know, invented, is most unfit for such a work. Translations ought never to be written in a verse which requires much command of rhyme. The stanza becomes a bed of Procrustes; and the thoughts of the unfortunate author are alternately racked and curtailed to fit their new receptacle. The abrupt and yet consecutive style of Dante suffers more than that of any other poet by a version diffuse in style, and divided into paragraphs, for they deserve no other name, of equal length.

Nothing can be said in favour of Hayley's attempt, but that it is better than Boyd's. His mind was a tolerable specimen of filigree work,—rather elegant, and very feeble. All that can be said for his best works is that they are neat. All that can be said against his worst is that they are stupid. He might have translated Metastasio tolerably. But he was utterly unable to do justice to the

> "rime e aspre e chiocce,
> "Come si converrebbe al tristo buco." *

I turn with pleasure from these wretched performances to Mr Cary's translation. It is a work which well deserves a separate discussion, and on which, if this article were not already too long, I could dwell with great pleasure. At present I will only say that there is no other version in the world, as far as I know, so faithful, yet that there is no other version which so fully proves that the translator is himself a man of poetical genius. Those who are ignorant of the Italian language should read it to become acquainted with the Divine Comedy. Those who are most intimate with Italian literature should read it for its original merits: and I believe that they will find it difficult to determine whether the author deserves most praise for his intimacy with the language of Dante, or for his extraordinary mastery over his own.

CRITICISMS ON THE PRINCIPAL ITALIAN WRITERS.

No. II. Petrarch. (April 1824.)

> Et vos, o lauri, carpam, et te, proxima myrte,
> Sic positæ quoniam suaves miscetis odores. Virgil.

It would not be easy to name a writer whose celebrity, when both its extent and its duration are taken into the account, can be considered as equal to that of Petrarch. Four centuries and a half have elapsed since his death. Yet still the inhabitants of every nation throughout the western world are as familiar with his character and his adventures as with the most illustrious names, and the most recent anecdotes, of their own literary history. This is indeed a rare distinction. His detractors must acknowledge that it could not have been acquired by a poet destitute of merit. His admirers will scarcely maintain that the unassisted merit of Petrarch could have raised him to that eminence which has not yet been attained by Shakspeare, Milton, or Dante,—that eminence, of which perhaps no modern writer, excepting himself and Cervantes, has long retained possession,—an European reputation.

It is not difficult to discover some of the causes to which this great man has owed a celebrity, which I cannot but think disproportioned to his

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* Inferno, canto xxxii.

real claims on the admiration of mankind. In the first place, he is an egotist. Egotism in conversation is universally abhorred. Lovers, and, I believe, lovers alone, pardon it in each other. No services, no talents, no powers of pleasing, render it endurable. Gratitude, admiration, interest, fear, scarcely prevent those who are condemned to listen to it from indicating their disgust and fatigue. The childless uncle, the powerful patron can scarcely extort this compliance. We leave the inside of the mail in a storm, and mount the box, rather than hear the history of our companion. The chaplain bites his lips in the presence of the archbishop. The midshipman yawns at the table of the First Lord. Yet, from whatever cause, this practice, the pest of conversation, gives to writing a zest which nothing else can impart. Rousseau made the boldest experiment of this kind; and it fully succeeded. In our own time Lord Byron, by a series of attempts of the same nature, made himself the object of general interest and admiration. Wordsworth wrote with egotism more intense, but less obvious; and he has been rewarded with a sect of worshippers, comparatively small in number, but far more enthusiastic in their devotion. It is needless to multiply instances. Even now all the walks of literature are infested with mendicants for fame, who attempt to excite our interest by exhibiting all the distortions of their intellects, and stripping the covering from all the putrid sores of their feelings. Nor are there wanting many who push their imitation of the beggars whom they resemble a step further, and who find it easier to extort a pittance from the spectator, by simulating deformity and debility from which they are exempt, than by such honest labour as their health and strength enable them to perform. In the meantime the credulous public pities and pampers a nuisance which requires only the treadmill and the whip. This art, often successful when employed by dunces, gives irresistible fascination to works which possess intrinsic merit. We are always desirous to know something of the character and situation of those whose writings we have perused with pleasure. The passages in which Milton has alluded to his own circumstances are perhaps read more frequently, and with more interest, than any other lines in his poems. It is amusing to observe with what labour critics have attempted to glean from the poems of Homer, some hints as to his situation and feelings. According to one hypothesis, he intended to describe himself under the name of Demodocus. Others maintain that he was the identical Phemius whose life Ulysses spared. This propensity of the human mind explains, I think, in a great degree, the extensive popularity of a poet whose works are little else than the expression of his personal feelings.

In the second place, Petrarch was not only an egotist, but an amatory egotist. The hopes and fears, the joys and sorrows, which he described, were derived from the passion which of all passions exerts the widest influence, and which of all passions borrows most from the imagination. He had also another immense advantage. He was the first eminent amatory poet who appeared after the great convulsion which had changed, not only the political, but the moral, state of the world. The Greeks, who, in their public institutions and their literary tastes, were diametrically opposed to the oriental nations, bore a considerable resemblance to those nations in their domestic habits. Like them, they despised the intellects and immured the persons of their women; and it was among the least of the frightful evils to which this pernicious system gave birth, that all the accomplishments of mind, and all the fascinations of manner, which, in a highly cultivated age, will generally be necessary to attach men to their female associates, were monopolised by the Phrynes and the Lamais. The indispensable ingredients of honourable and chivalrous love were nowhere to be found united. The matrons and their daughters confined in the harem,—insipid, uneducated, ignorant of all but the mechanical arts, scarcely seen till they were married,—could rarely excite interest; while their brilliant rivals, half Graces, half Harpies, elegant and informed, but fickle and rapacious, could never inspire respect.

The state of society in Rome was, in this point, far happier; and the Latin literature partook of the superiority. The Roman poets have decidedly surpassed those of Greece in the delineation of the passion of love. There is no subject which they have treated with so much success. Ovid, Catullus, Tibullus, Horace, and Propertius, in spite of all their faults, must be allowed to rank high in this department of the art. To these I would add my favourite Plautus; who, though he took his plots from Greece, found, I suspect, the originals of his enchanting female characters at Rome.

Still many evils remained: and, in the decline of the great empire, all that was pernicious in its domestic institutions appeared more strongly. Under the influence of governments at once dependent and tyrannical, which purchased, by cringing to their enemies, the power of trampling on their subjects, the Romans sunk into the lowest state of effeminacy and debasement. Falsehood, cowardice, sloth, conscious and unrepining degradation, formed the national character. Such a character is totally incompatible with the stronger passions. Love, in particular, which, in the modern sense of the word, implies protection and devotion on the one side, confidence on the other, respect and fidelity on both, could not exist among the sluggish and heartless slaves who cringed around the thrones of Honorius and Augustulus. At this period the great renovation commenced. The warriors of the north, destitute as they were of knowledge and humanity, brought with them, from their forests and marshes, those qualities without which humanity is a weakness and knowledge a curse,—energy—independence—the dread of shame—the contempt of danger. It would be most interesting to examine the manner in which the admixture of the savage conquerors and the effeminate slaves, after many generations of darkness and agitation, produced the modern European character;—to trace back, from the first conflict to the final amalgamation, the operation of that mysterious alchemy which, from hostile and worthless elements, has extracted the pure gold of human nature—to analyse the mass, and to determine the proportion in which the ingredients are mingled. But I will confine myself to the subject to which I have more particularly referred. The nature of the passion of love had undergone a complete change. It still retained, indeed, the fanciful and voluptuous character which it had possessed among the southern nations of antiquity. But it was tinged with the superstitious veneration with which the northern warriors had been accustomed to regard women. Devotion and war had imparted to it their most solemn and animating feelings. It was sanctified by the blessings of the Church, and decorated with the wreaths of the tournament. Venus, as in the ancient fable, was again rising above the dark and tempestuous waves which had so long covered her beauty. But she rose not now, as of old, in exposed and luxurious loveliness. She still wore the cestus of her ancient witchcraft; but the diadem of Juno was on her brow, and the ægis of Pallas in her hand. Love might, in fact, be called a new passion; and it is not astonishing that the first poet of eminence who wholly devoted his genius to this theme should have excited an extraordinary sensation. He may be compared to an adventurer who accidentally lands in a rich and unknown island; and who, though he may only set up an ill-shaped cross upon the shore, acquires possession of its treasures, and gives it his name. The claim of Petrarch was indeed somewhat like that of Amerigo Vespucci to the continent which should have derived its appellation from Columbus. The Provençal poets were unquestionably the masters of the Florentine. But they wrote in an age which could not appreciate their merits; and their imitator lived at the very period when composition in the vernacular language began to attract general attention. Petrarch was in literature what a Valentine is in love. The public preferred him, not because his merits were of a transcendent order, but because he was the first person whom they saw after they awoke from their long sleep.

Nor did Petrarch gain less by comparison with his immediate successors than with those who had preceded him. Till more than a century after his death Italy produced no poet who could be compared to him. This decay of genius is doubtless to be ascribed, in a great measure, to the influence which his own works had exercised upon the literature of his country. Yet it has conduced much to his fame. Nothing is more favourable to the reputation of a writer than to be succeeded by a race inferior to himself; and it is an advantage, from obvious causes, much more frequently enjoyed by those who corrupt the national taste than by those who improve it.

Another cause has co-operated with those which I have mentioned to spread the renown of Petrarch. I mean the interest which is inspired by the events of his life—an interest which must have been strongly felt by his contemporaries, since, after an interval of five hundred years, no critic can be wholly exempt from its influence. Among the great men to whom we owe the resuscitation of science he deserves the foremost place; and his enthusiastic attachment to this great cause constitutes his most just and splendid title to the gratitude of posterity. He was the votary of literature. He loved it with a perfect love. He worshipped it with an almost fanatical devotion. He was the missionary, who proclaimed its discoveries to distant countries—the pilgrim, who travelled far and wide to collect its reliques—the hermit, who retired to seclusion to meditate on its beauties—the champion, who fought its battles—the conqueror, who, in more than a metaphorical sense, led barbarism and ignorance in triumph, and received in the Capitol the laurel which his magnificent victory had earned.

Nothing can be conceived more noble or affecting than that ceremony. The superb palaces and porticoes, by which had rolled the ivory chariots of Marius and Cæsar, had long mouldered into dust. The laurelled fasces—the golden eagles—the shouting legions—the captives and the pictured cities—were indeed wanting to his victorious procession. The sceptre had passed away from Rome. But she still retained the mightier influence of an intellectual empire, and was now to confer the prouder reward of an intellectual triumph. To the man who had extended the dominion of her ancient language—who had erected the trophies of philosophy and imagination in the haunts of ignorance and ferocity—whose captives were the hearts of admiring nations enchained by the influence of his song—whose spoils were the treasures of ancient genius rescued from obscurity and decay—the Eternal City offered the just and glorious tribute of her gratitude. Amidst the ruined monuments of ancient and the infant erections of modern art, he who had restored the broken link between the two ages of human civilisation was crowned with the wreath which he had deserved from the moderns who owed to him their refinement—from the ancients who owed to him their fame. Never was a coronation so august witnessed by Westminster or by Rheims.

When we turn from this glorious spectacle to the private chamber of the poet,—when we contemplate the struggle of passion and virtue,—the eye dimmed, the cheek furrowed, by the tears of sinful and hopeless desire,—when we reflect on the whole history of his attachment, from the gay fantasy of his youth to the lingering despair of his age, pity and affection mingle with our admiration. Even after death had placed the last seal on his misery, we see him devoting to the cause of the human mind all the strength and energy which love and sorrow had spared. He lived the apostle of literature ;—he fell its martyr :—he was found dead with his head reclined on a book.

Those who have studied the life and writings of Petrarch with attention, will perhaps be inclined to make some deductions from this panegyric. It cannot be denied that his merits were disfigured by a most unpleasant affectation. His zeal for literature communicated a tinge of pedantry to all his feelings and opinions. His love was the love of a sonnetteer :—his patriotism was the patriotism of an antiquarian. The interest with which we contemplate the works, and study the history, of those who, in former ages, have occupied our country, arises from the associations which connect them with the community in which are comprised all the objects of our affection and our hope. In the mind of Petrarch these feelings were reversed. He loved Italy, because it abounded with the monuments of the ancient masters of the world. His native city—the fair and glorious Florence—the modern Athens, then in all the bloom and strength of its youth, could not obtain, from the most distinguished of its citizens, any portion of that passionate homage which he paid to the decrepitude of Rome. These and many other blemishes, though they must in candour be acknowledged, can but in a very slight degree diminish the glory of his career. For my own part, I look upon it with so much fondness and pleasure that I feel reluctant to turn from it to the consideration of his works, which I by no means contemplate with equal admiration.

Nevertheless, I think highly of the poetical powers of Petrarch. He did not possess, indeed, the art of strongly presenting sensible objects to the imagination ;—and this is the more remarkable, because the talent of which I speak is that which peculiarly distinguishes the Italian poets. In the Divine Comedy it is displayed in its highest perfection. It characterises almost every celebrated poem in the language. Perhaps this is to be attributed to the circumstance, that painting and sculpture had attained a high degree of excellence in Italy before poetry had been extensively cultivated. Men were debarred from books, but accustomed from childhood to contemplate the admirable works of art, which, even in the thirteenth century, Italy began to produce. Hence their imaginations received so strong a bias that, even in their writings, a taste for graphic delineation is discernible. The progress of things in England has been in all respects different. The consequence is, that English historical pictures are poems on canvas; while Italian poems are pictures painted to the mind by means of words. Of this national characteristic the writings of Petrarch are almost totally destitute. His sonnets indeed, from their subject and nature, and his Latin poems, from the restraints which always shackle one who writes in a dead language, cannot fairly be received in evidence. But his Triumphs absolutely required the exercise of this talent, and exhibit no indications of it.

Genius, however, he certainly possessed, and genius of a high order. His ardent, tender, and magnificent turn of thought, his brilliant fancy, his command of expression, at once forcible and elegant, must be acknowledged. Nature meant him for the prince of lyric writers. But by one fatal present she deprived her other gifts of half their value. He would have been a much greater poet had he been a less clever man. His ingenuity was the bane of his mind. He abandoned the noble and natural style, in which he might have excelled, for the conceits which he produced with a facility at once admirable and disgusting. His muse, like the Roman lady in Livy, was tempted by gaudy ornaments to betray the fastnesses of her strength, and, like her, was crushed beneath the glittering bribes which had seduced her.

The paucity of his thoughts is very remarkable. It is impossible to look without amazement on a mind so fertile in combinations, yet so barren of images. His amatory poetry is wholly made up of a very few topics, disposed in so many orders, and exhibited in so many lights, that it reminds us of those arithmetical problems about permutations, which so much astonish the unlearned. The French cook, who boasted that he could make fifteen different dishes out of a nettle-top, was not a greater master of his art. The mind of Petrarch was a kaleidoscope. At every turn it presents us with new forms, always fantastic, occasionally beautiful; and we can scarcely believe that all these varieties have been produced by the same worthless fragments of glass. The sameness of his images is, indeed, in some degree, to be attributed to the sameness of his subject. It would be unreasonable to expect perpetual variety from so many hundred compositions, all of the same length, all in the same measure, and all addressed to the same insipid and heartless coquette. I cannot but suspect also that the perverted taste, which is the blemish of his amatory verses, was to be attributed to the influence of Laura, who, probably, like most critics of her sex, preferred a gaudy to a majestic style. Be this as it may, he no sooner changes his subject than he changes his manner. When he speaks of the wrongs and degradation of Italy, devastated by foreign invaders, and but feebly defended by her pusillanimous children, the effeminate lisp of the sonnetteer is exchanged for a cry, wild, and solemn, and piercing as that which proclaimed "Sleep no more" to the bloody house of Cawdor. "Italy seems not to feel her sufferings," exclaims her impassioned poet; "decrepit, sluggish, and languid, will she sleep for ever? Will there be none to awake her? Oh that I had my hands twisted in her hair!" *

Nor is it with less energy that he denounces against the Mahometan Babylon the vengeance of Europe and of Christ. His magnificent enumeration of the ancient exploits of the Greeks must always excite admiration, and cannot be perused without the deepest interest, at a time when the wise and good, bitterly disappointed in so many other

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* "Che suoi guai non par che senta;
Vecchia, oziosa, e lenta.
Dormirà sempre, e non fia chi la svegli?
Le man l' avess' io avvolte entro e capegli."
Canzone xi.

countries, are looking with breathless anxiety towards the natal land of liberty,—the field of Marathon,—and the deadly pass where the Lion of Lacedæmon turned to bay.*

His poems on religious subjects also deserve the highest commendation. At the head of these must be placed the Ode to the Virgin. It is, perhaps, the finest hymn in the world. His devout veneration receives an exquisitely poetical character from the delicate perception of the sex and the loveliness of his idol, which we may easily trace throughout the whole composition.

I could dwell with pleasure on these and similar parts of the writings of Petrarch ; but I must return to his amatory poetry : to that he entrusted his fame ; and to that he has principally owed it.

The prevailing defect of his best compositions on this subject is the universal brilliancy with which they are lighted up. The natural language of the passions is, indeed, often figurative and fantastic ; and with none is this more the case than with that of love. Still there is a limit. The feelings should, indeed, have their ornamental garb ; but, like an elegant woman, they should be neither muffled nor exposed. The drapery should be so arranged, as at once to answer the purposes of modest concealment and judicious display. The decorations should sometimes be employed to hide a defect, and sometimes to heighten a beauty ; but never to conceal, much less to distort, the charms to which they are subsidiary. The love of Petrarch, on the contrary, arrays itself like a foppish savage, whose nose is bored with a golden ring, whose skin is painted with grotesque forms and dazzling colours, and whose ears are drawn down his shoulders by the weight of jewels. It is a rule, without any exception, in all kinds of composition, that the principal idea, the predominant feeling, should never be confounded with the accompanying decorations. It should generally be distinguished from them by greater simplicity of expression ; as we recognise Napoleon in the pictures of his battles, amidst a crowd of embroidered coats and plumes, by his grey cloak and his hat without a feather. In the verses of Petrarch it is generally impossible to say what thought is meant to be prominent. All is equally elaborate. The chief wears the same gorgeous and degrading livery with his retinue, and obtains only his share of the indifferent stare which we bestow upon them in common. The poems have no strong lights and shades, no background, no foreground ;—they are like the illuminated figures in an oriental manuscript,—plenty of rich tints and no perspective. Such are the faults of the most celebrated of these compositions. Of those which are universally acknowledged to be bad it is scarcely possible to speak with patience. Yet they have much in common with their splendid companions. They differ from them, as a May-day procession of chimneysweepers differs from the Field of Cloth of Gold. They have the gaudiness but not the wealth. His muse belongs to that numerous class of females who have no objection to be dirty, while they can be tawdry. When his brilliant conceits are exhausted, he supplies their place with metaphysical quibbles, forced antitheses, bad puns, and execrable charades. In his fifth sonnet he may, I think, be said to have sounded the lowest chasm of the Bathos. Upon the whole, that piece may be safely pronounced to be the worst attempt at poetry, and the worst attempt at wit, in the world.

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* "Maratona, e le mortali strette
Che difese il LEON con poca gente."
Canzone v.

A strong proof of the truth of these criticisms is, that almost all the sonnets produce exactly the same effect on the mind of the reader. They relate to all the various moods of a lover, from joy to despair :—yet they are perused, as far as my experience and observation have gone, with exactly the same feeling. The fact is, that in none of them are the passion and the ingenuity mixed in just proportions. There is not enough sentiment to dilute the condiments which are employed to season it. The repast which he sets before us resembles the Spanish entertainment in Dryden's *Mock Astrologer*, at which the relish of all the dishes and sauces was overpowered by the common flavour of spice. Fish,—flesh,—fowl, —everything at table tasted of nothing but red pepper.

The writings of Petrarch may indeed suffer undeservedly from one cause to which I must allude. His imitators have so much familiarised the ear of Italy and of Europe to the favourite topics of amorous flattery and lamentation, that we can scarcely think them original when we find them in the first author; and, even when our understandings have convinced us that they were new to him, they are still old to us. This has been the fate of many of the finest passages of the most eminent writers. It is melancholy to trace a noble thought from stage to stage of its profanation; to see it transferred from the first illustrious wearer to his lacqueys, turned, and turned again, and at last hung on a scarecrow. Petrarch has really suffered much from this cause. Yet that he should have so suffered is a sufficient proof that his excellences were not of the highest order. A line may be stolen; but the pervading spirit of a great poet is not to be surreptitiously obtained by a plagiarist. The continued imitation of twenty-five centuries has left Homer as it found him. If every simile and every turn of Dante had been copied ten thousand times, the Divine Comedy would have retained all its freshness. It was easy for the porter in Farquhar to pass for Beau Clincher, by borrowing his lace and his pulvilio. It would have been more difficult to enact Sir Harry Wildair.

Before I quit this subject I must defend Petrarch from one accusation which is in the present day frequently brought against him. His sonnets are pronounced by a large sect of critics not to possess certain qualities which they maintain to be indispensable to sonnets, with as much confidence, and as much reason, as their prototypes of old insisted on the unities of the drama. I am an exoteric—utterly unable to explain the mysteries of this new poetical faith. I only know that it is a faith, which except a man do keep pure and undefiled, without doubt he shall be called a blockhead. I cannot, however, refrain from asking what is the particular virtue which belongs to fourteen as distinguished from all other numbers. Does it arise from its being a multiple of seven? Has this principle any reference to the sabbatical ordinance? Or is it to the order of rhymes that these singular properties are attached? Unhappily the sonnets of Shakspeare differ as much in this respect from those of Petrarch, as from a Spenserian or an octave stanza. Away with this unmeaning jargon! We have pulled down the old regime of criticism. I trust that we shall never tolerate the equally pedantic and irrational despotism, which some of the revolutionary leaders would erect upon its ruins. We have not dethroned Aristotle and Bossu for this.

These sonnet-fanciers would do well to reflect that, though the style of Petrarch may not suit the standard of perfection which they have chosen, they lie under great obligations to these very poems,—that, but for Petrarch the measure, concerning which they legislate so judiciously, would probably never have attracted notice; and that to him they owe the pleasure of admiring, and the glory of composing, pieces, which seem to have been produced by Master Slender, with the assistance of his man Simple.

I cannot conclude these remarks without making a few observations on the Latin writings of Petrarch. It appears that, both by himself and by his contemporaries, these were far more highly valued than his compositions in the vernacular language. Posterity, the supreme court of literary appeal, has not only reversed the judgment, but, according to its general practice, reversed it with costs, and condemned the unfortunate works to pay, not only for their own inferiority, but also for the injustice of those who had given them an unmerited preference. And it must be owned that, without making large allowances for the circumstances under which they were produced, we cannot pronounce a very favourable judgment. They must be considered as exotics, transplanted to a foreign climate, and reared in an unfavourable situation; and it would be unreasonable to expect from them the health and the vigour which we find in the indigenous plants around them, or which they might themselves have possessed in their native soil. He has but very imperfectly imitated the style of the Latin authors, and has not compensated for the deficiency by enriching the ancient language with the graces of modern poetry. The splendour and ingenuity, which we admire, even when we condemn it, in his Italian works, is almost totally wanting, and only illuminates with rare and occasional glimpses the dreary obscurity of the African. The eclogues have more animation; but they can only be called poems by courtesy. They have nothing in common with his writings in his native language, except the eternal pun about Laura and Daphne. None of these works would have placed him on a level with Vida or Buchanan. Yet, when we compare him with those who preceded him, when we consider that he went on the forlorn hope of literature, that he was the first who perceived, and the first who attempted to revive, the finer elegancies of the ancient language of the world, we shall perhaps think more highly of him than of those who could never have surpassed his beauties if they had not inherited them.

He has aspired to emulate the philosophical eloquence of Cicero, as well as the poetical majesty of Virgil. His essay on the Remedies of Good and Evil Fortune is a singular work in a colloquial form, and a most scholastic style. It seems to be framed upon the model of the Tusculan Questions,—with what success those who have read it may easily determine. It consists of a series of dialogues: in each of these a person is introduced who has experienced some happy or some adverse event: he gravely states his case; and a reasoner, or rather Reason personified, confutes him; a task not very difficult, since the disciple defends his position only by pertinaciously repeating it, in almost the same words at the end of every argument of his antagonist. In this manner Petrarch solves an immense variety of cases. Indeed, I doubt whether it would be possible to name any pleasure or any calamity which does not find a place in this dissertation. He gives excellent advice to a man who is in expectation of discovering the philosopher's stone;—to another, who has formed a fine aviary;—to a third, who is delighted with the tricks of a favourite monkey. His lectures to the unfortunate are equally singular. He seems to imagine that a precedent in point is a sufficient consolation for every form of suffering. "Our town is taken," says one complainant; "So was Troy," replies his comforter. "My wife has eloped," says another; "If it has happened to you once, it happened to Menelaus twice." One poor fellow is in great distress at having discovered that his wife's son is none of his. "It is hard," says he, "that I should have had the expense of bringing up one who is indifferent to me." "You are a man," returns his monitor, quoting the famous line of Terence; "and nothing that belongs to any other man ought to be indifferent to you." The physical calamities of life are not omitted; and there is in particular a disquisition on the advantages of having the itch, which, if not convincing, is certainly very amusing.

The invectives on an unfortunate physician, or rather upon the medical science, have more spirit. Petrarch was thoroughly in earnest on this subject. And the bitterness of his feelings occasionally produces, in the midst of his classical and scholastic pedantry, a sentence worthy of the second Philippic. Swift himself might have envied the chapter on the causes of the paleness of physicians.

Of his Latin works the Epistles are the most generally known and admired. As compositions they are certainly superior to his essays. But their excellence is only comparative. From so large a collection of letters, written by so eminent a man, during so varied and eventful a life, we should have expected a complete and spirited view of the literature, the manners, and the politics of the age. A traveller—a poet—a scholar—a lover—a courtier—a recluse—he might have perpetuated, in an imperishable record, the form and pressure of the age and body of the time. Those who read his correspondence, in the hope of finding such information as this, will be utterly disappointed. It contains nothing characteristic of the period or of the individual. It is a series, not of letters, but of themes; and, as it is not generally known, might be very safely employed at public schools as a magazine of commonplaces. Whether he write on politics to the Emperor and the Doge, or send advice and consolation to a private friend, every line is crowded with examples and quotations, and sounds big with Anaxagoras and Scipio. Such was the interest excited by the character of Petrarch, and such the admiration which was felt for his epistolary style, that it was with difficulty that his letters reached the place of their destination. The poet describes, with pretended regret and real complacency, the importunity of the curious, who often opened, and sometimes stole, these favourite compositions. It is a remarkable fact that, of all his epistles, the least affected are those which are addressed to the dead and the unborn. Nothing can be more absurd than his whim of composing grave letters of expostulation and commendation to Cicero and Seneca; yet these strange performances are written in a far more natural manner than his communications to his living correspondents. But of all his Latin works the preference must be given to the Epistle to Posterity; a simple, noble, and pathetic composition, most honourable both to his taste and his heart. If we can make allowance for some of the affected humility of an author, we shall perhaps think that no literary man has left a more pleasing memorial of himself.

In conclusion, we may pronounce that the works of Petrarch were below both his genius and his celebrity; and that the circumstances under which he wrote were as adverse to the development of his powers as they were favourable to the extension of his fame.

SOME ACCOUNT OF THE GREAT LAWSUIT BETWEEN THE PARISHES OF ST DENNIS AND ST GEORGE IN THE WATER. (April 1824.)

Part I.

The parish of St Dennis is one of the most pleasant parts of the county in which it is situated. It is fertile, well wooded, well watered, and of an excellent air. For many generations the manor had been holden in tail-male by a worshipful family, who have always taken precedence of their neighbours at the races and the sessions.

In ancient times the affairs of this parish were administered by a Court-Baron, in which the freeholders were judges; and the rates were levied by select vestries of the inhabitant householders. But at length these good customs fell into disuse. The Lords of the Manor, indeed, still held courts for form's sake; but they or their stewards had the whole management of affairs. They demanded services, duties, and customs to which they had no just title. Nay, they would often bring actions against their neighbours for their own private advantage, and then send in the bill to the parish. No objection was made, during many years, to these proceedings, so that the rates became heavier and heavier: nor was any person exempted from these demands, except the footmen and gamekeepers of the squire and the rector of the parish. They indeed were never checked in any excess. They would come to an honest labourer's cottage, eat his pancakes, tuck his fowls into their pockets, and cane the poor man himself. If he went up to the great house to complain, it was hard to get the speech of Sir Lewis; and, indeed, his only chance of being righted was to coax the squire's pretty housekeeper, who could do what she pleased with her master. If he ventured to intrude upon the Lord of the Manor without this precaution, he gained nothing by his pains. Sir Lewis, indeed, would at first receive him with a civil face; for, to give him his due, he could be a fine gentleman when he pleased. "Good day, my friend," he would say, "what situation have you in my family?" "Bless your honour!" says the poor fellow, "I am not one of your honour's servants; I rent a small piece of ground, your honour." "Then, you dog," quoth the squire, "what do you mean by coming here? Has a gentleman nothing to do but to hear the complaints of clowns? Here! Philip, James, Dick, toss this fellow in a blanket; or duck him, and set him in the stocks to dry."

One of these precious Lords of the Manor enclosed a deer-park; and, in order to stock it, he seized all the pretty pet fawns that his tenants had brought up, without paying them a farthing, or asking their leave. It was a sad day for the parish of St Dennis. Indeed, I do not believe that all his oppressive exactions and long bills enraged the poor tenants so much as this cruel measure.

Yet for a long time, in spite of all these inconveniences, St Dennis's was a very pleasant place. The people could not refrain from capering if they heard the sound of a fiddle. And, if they were inclined to be riotous, Sir Lewis had only to send for Punch, or the dancing dogs, and all was quiet again. But this could not last for ever; they began to think more and more of their condition; and, at last, a club of foulmouthed, good-for-nothing rascals was held at the sign of the Devil, for the purpose of abusing the squire and the parson. The doctor, to own the truth, was old and indolent, extremely fat and greedy. He had not preached a tolerable sermon for a long time. The squire was still worse; so that, partly by truth and partly by falsehood, the club set the whole parish against their superiors. The boys scrawled caricatures of the clergyman upon the church-door, and shot at the landlord with pop-guns as he rode a-hunting. It was even whispered about that the Lord of the Manor had no right to his estate, and that, if he were compelled to produce the original title-deeds, it would be found that he only held the estate in trust for the inhabitants of the parish.

In the meantime the squire was pressed more and more for money. The parish could pay no more. The rector refused to lend a farthing. The Jews were clamorous for their money; and the landlord had no other resource than to call together the inhabitants of the parish, and to request their assistance. They now attacked him furiously about their grievances, and insisted that he should relinquish his oppressive powers. They insisted that his footmen should be kept in order, that the parson should pay his share of the rates, that the children of the parish should be allowed to fish in the trout-stream, and to gather blackberries in the hedges. They at last went so far as to demand that he should acknowledge that he held his estate only in trust for them. His distress compelled him to submit. They, in return, agreed to set him free from his pecuniary difficulties, and to suffer him to inhabit the manor-house; and only annoyed him from time to time by singing impudent ballads under his window.

The neighbouring gentlefolks did not look on these proceedings with much complacency. It is true that Sir Lewis and his ancestors had plagued them with law-suits, and affronted them at county meetings. Still they preferred the insolence of a gentleman to that of the rabble, and felt some uneasiness lest the example should infect their own tenants.

A large party of them met at the house of Lord Cæsar Germain. Lord Cæsar was the proudest man in the county. His family was very ancient and illustrious, though not particularly opulent. He had invited most of his wealthy neighbours. There was Mrs Kitty North, the relict of poor Squire Peter, respecting whom the coroner's jury had found a verdict of accidental death, but whose fate had nevertheless excited strange whispers in the neighbourhood. There was Squire Don, the owner of the great West Indian property, who was not so rich as he had formerly been, but still retained his pride, and kept up his customary pomp; so that he had plenty of plate but no breeches. There was Squire Von Blunderbussen, who had succeeded to the estates of his uncle, old Colonel Frederic Von Blunderbussen, of the hussars. The colonel was a very singular old fellow; he used to learn a page of Chambaud's grammar, and to translate Télémaque, every morning, and he kept six French masters to teach him to parleyvoo. Nevertheless he was a shrewd clever man, and improved his estate with so much care, sometimes by honest and sometimes by dishonest means, that he left a very pretty property to his nephew.

Lord Cæsar poured out a glass of Tokay for Mrs Kitty. "Your health, my dear madam, I never saw you look more charming. Pray, what think you of these doings at St Dennis's?"

"Fine doings, indeed!" interrupted Von Blunderbussen; "I wish that we had my old uncle alive, he would have had some of them up to the halberts. He knew how to use a cat-o'-nine-tails. If things go on in this way, a gentleman will not be able to horsewhip an impudent farmer, or to say a civil word to a milk-maid."

"Indeed, it 's very true, Sir," said Mrs Kitty; "their insolence is intolerable. Look at me, for instance:—a poor lone woman!—My dear Peter dead! I loved him:—so I did; and, when he died, I was so hysterical you cannot think. And now I cannot lean on the arm of a decent footman, or take a walk with a tall grenadier behind me, just to protect me from audacious vagabonds, but they must have their nauseous suspicions;—odious creatures!"

"This must be stopped," replied Lord Cæsar. "We ought to contribute to support my poor brother-in-law against these rascals. I will write to Squire Guelf on this subject by this night's post. His name is always at the head of our county subscriptions."

If the people of St Dennis's had been angry before, they were well-nigh mad when they heard of this conversation. The whole parish ran to the manor-house. Sir Lewis's Swiss porter shut the door against them; but they broke in and knocked him on the head for his impudence. They then seized the Squire, hooted at him, pelted him, ducked him, and carried him to the watch-house. They turned the rector into the street, burnt his wig and band, and sold the church-plate by auction. They put up a painted Jezebel in the pulpit to preach. They scratched out the texts which were written round the church, and scribbled profane scraps of songs and plays in their place. They set the organ playing to pot-house tunes. Instead of being decently asked in church, they were married over a broomstick. But, of all their whims, the use of the new patent steel-traps was the most remarkable.

This trap was constructed on a completely new principle. It consisted of a cleaver hung in a frame like a window; when any poor wretch got in, down it came with a tremendous din, and took off his head in a twinkling. They got the squire into one of these machines. In order to prevent any of his partisans from getting footing in the parish, they placed traps at every corner. It was impossible to walk through the highway at broad noon without tumbling into one or other of them. No man could go about his business in security. Yet so great was the hatred which the inhabitants entertained for the old family, that a few decent, honest people, who begged them to take down the steel-traps, and to put up humane man-traps in their room, were very roughly handled for their good nature.

In the meantime the neighbouring gentry undertook a suit against the parish on the behalf of Sir Lewis's heir, and applied to Squire Guelf for his assistance.

Everybody knows that Squire Guelf is more closely tied up than any gentleman in the shire. He could, therefore, lend them no help; but he referred them to the Vestry of the Parish of St George in the Water. These good people had long borne a grudge against their neighbours on the other side of the stream; and some mutual trespasses had lately occurred which increased their hostility.

There was an honest Irishman, a great favourite among them, who used to entertain them with raree-shows, and to exhibit a magic lantern to the children on winter evenings. He had gone quite mad upon this subject. Sometimes he would call out in the middle of the street—"Take care of that corner, neighbours; for the love of Heaven, keep clear of that post, there is a patent steel-trap concealed thereabouts." Sometimes he would be disturbed by frightful dreams; then he would get up at dead of night, open his window and cry "fire," till the parish was roused, and the engines sent for. The pulpit of the Parish of St George seemed likely to fall; I believe that the only reason was that the parson had grown too fat and heavy; but nothing would persuade this honest man but that it was a scheme of the people at St Dennis's, and that they had sawed through the pillars in order to break the rector's neck. Once he went about with a knife in his pocket, and told all the persons whom he met that it had been sharpened by the knife-grinder of the next parish to cut their throats. These extravagancies had a great effect on the people; and the more so because they were espoused by Squire Guelf's steward, who was the most influential person in the parish. He was a very fair-spoken man, very attentive to the main chance, and the idol of the old women, because he never played at skittles or danced with the girls; and, indeed, never took any recreation but that of drinking on Saturday nights with his friend Harry, the Scotch pedlar. His supporters called him Sweet William; his enemies the Bottomless Pit.

The people of St Dennis's, however, had their advocates. There was Frank, the richest farmer in the parish, whose great grandfather had been knocked on the head many years before, in a squabble between the parish and a former landlord. There was Dick, the merry-andrew, rather light-fingered and riotous, but a clever droll fellow. Above all, there was Charley, the publican, a jolly, fat, honest lad, a great favourite with the women, who, if he had not been rather too fond of ale and chuck-farthing, would have been the best fellow in the neighbourhood.

"My boys," said Charley, "this is exceedingly well for Madam North;—not that I would speak uncivilly of her; she put up my picture in her best room, bless her for it! But, I say, this is very well for her, and for Lord Cæsar, and Squire Don, and Colonel Von;—but what affair is it of yours or mine? It is not to be wondered at, that gentlemen should wish to keep poor people out of their own. But it is strange indeed that they should expect the poor themselves to combine against their own interests. If the folks at St Dennis's should attack us we have the law and our cudgels to protect us. But why, in the name of wonder, are we to attack them? When old Sir Charles, who was Lord of the Manor formerly, and the parson, who was presented by him to the living, tried to bully the vestry, did not we knock their heads together, and go to meeting to hear Jeremiah Ringletub preach? And did the Squire Don, or the great Sir Lewis, that lived at that time, or the Germains, say a word against us for it? Mind your own business, my lads: law is not to be had for nothing; and we, you may be sure, shall have to pay the whole bill."

Nevertheless the people of St George's were resolved on law. They cried out most lustily, "Squire Guelf for ever! Sweet William for ever! No steel traps!" Squire Guelf took all the rascally footmen who had worn old Sir Lewis's livery into his service. They were fed in the kitchen on the very best of everything, though they had no settlement. Many people, and the paupers in particular, grumbled at these proceedings. The steward, however, devised a way to keep them quiet.

There had lived in this parish for many years an old gentleman, named Sir Habeas Corpus. He was said by some to be of Saxon, by some of Norman, extraction. Some maintain that he was not born till after the time of Sir Charles, to whom we have before alluded. Others are of opinion that he was a legitimate son of old Lady Magna Charta, although he was long concealed and kept out of his birthright. Certain it is that he was a very benevolent person. Whenever any poor fellow was taken up on grounds which he thought insufficient, he used to attend on his behalf and bail him; and thus he had become so popular, that to take direct measures against him was out of the question.

The steward, accordingly, brought a dozen physicians to examine Sir Habeas. After consultation, they reported that he was in a very bad way, and ought not, on any account, to be allowed to stir out for several months. Fortified with this authority, the parish officers put him to bed, closed his windows, and barred his doors. They paid him every attention, and from time to time issued bulletins of his health. The steward never spoke of him without declaring that he was the best gentleman in the world; but excellent care was taken that he should never stir out of doors.

When this obstacle was removed, the Squire and the steward kept the parish in excellent order; flogged this man, sent that man to the stocks, and pushed forward the law-suit with a noble disregard of expense. They were, however, wanting either in skill or in fortune. And everything went against them after their antagonists had begun to employ Solicitor Nap.

Who does not know the name of Solicitor Nap? At what alehouse is not his behaviour discussed? In what print-shop is not his picture seen? Yet how little truth has been said about him! Some people hold that he used to give laudanum by pints to his six clerks for his amusement. Others, whose number has very much increased since he was killed by the gaol distemper, conceive that he was the very model of honour and good-nature. I shall try to tell the truth about him.

He was assuredly an excellent solicitor. In his way he never was surpassed. As soon as the parish began to employ him, their cause took a turn. In a very little time they were successful; and Nap became rich. He now set up for a gentleman; took possession of the old manor-house; got into the commission of the peace, and affected to be on a par with the best of the county. He governed the vestries as absolutely as the old family had done. Yet, to give him his due, he managed things with far more discretion than either Sir Lewis or the rioters who had pulled the Lords of the Manor down. He kept his servants in tolerable order. He removed the steel traps from the highways and the corners of the streets. He still left a few indeed in the more exposed parts of his premises; and set up a board announcing that traps and spring guns were set in his grounds. He brought the poor parson back to the parish; and, though he did not enable him to keep a fine house and a coach as formerly, he settled him in a snug little cottage, and allowed him a pleasant pad-nag. He whitewashed the church again; and put the stocks, which had been much wanted of late, into good repair.

With the neighbouring gentry, however, he was no favourite. He was crafty and litigious. He cared nothing for right, if he could raise a point of law against them. He pounded their cattle, broke their hedges, and seduced their tenants from them. He almost ruined Lord Cæsar with actions, in every one of which he was successful. Von Blunderbussen went to law with him for an alleged trespass, but was cast, and almost ruined by the costs of suit. He next took a fancy to the seat of Squire Don, who was, to say the truth, little better than an idiot. He asked the poor dupe to dinner, and then threatened to have him tossed in a blanket unless he would make over his estates to him. The poor Squire signed and sealed a deed by which the property was assigned to Joe, a brother of Nap's, in trust for and to the use of Nap himself. The tenants, however, stood out. They maintained that the estate was entailed, and refused to pay rents to the new landlord; and in this refusal they were stoutly supported by the people in St George's.

About the same time Nap took it into his head to match with quality, and nothing would serve him but one of the Miss Germains. Lord Cæsar swore like a trooper; but there was no help for it. Nap had twice put executions in his principal residence, and had refused to discharge the latter of the two till he had extorted a bond from his Lordship which compelled him to comply.

THE END OF THE FIRST PART.

A CONVERSATION BETWEEN MR ABRAHAM COWLEY AND MR JOHN MILTON, TOUCHING THE GREAT CIVIL WAR.

SET DOWN BY A GENTLEMAN OF THE MIDDLE TEMPLE.
(AUGUST 1824.)

> "Referre sermones Deorum et
> Magna modis tenuare parvis."—HORACE.

I HAVE thought it good to set down in writing a memorable debate, wherein I was a listener, and two men of pregnant parts and great reputation discoursers; hoping that my friends will not be displeased to have a record both of the strange times through which I have lived, and of the famous men with whom I have conversed. It chanced in the warm and beautiful spring of the year 1665, a little before the saddest summer that ever London saw, that I went to the Bowling Green at Piccadilly, whither, at that time, the best gentry made continual resorts. There I met Mr Cowley, who had lately left Barnelms. There was then a house preparing for him at Chertsey; and till it should be finished, he had come up for a short time to London, that he might urge a suit to his Grace of Buckingham touching certain lands of her Majesty's, whereof he requested a lease. I had the honour to be familiarly acquainted with that worthy gentleman and most excellent poet, whose death hath been deplored with as general a consent of all Powers that delight in the woods, or in verse, or in love, as was of old that of Daphnis or of Callus.

After some talk, which it is not material to set down at large, concerning his suit and his vexations at the court, where indeed his honesty did him more harm than his parts could do him good, I entreated him to dine with me at my lodging in the Temple, which he most courteously promised. And, that so eminent a guest might not lack a better entertainment than cooks or vintners can provide, I sent to the house of Mr

John Milton, in the Artillery Walk, to beg that he would also be my guest. For, though he had been secretary, first to the Council of State, and, after that, to the Protector, and Mr Cowley had held the same post under the Lord St Albans in his banishment, I hoped, notwithstanding, that they would think themselves rather united by their common art than divided by their different factions. And so indeed it proved. For, while we sat at table, they talked freely of many men and things, as well ancient as modern, with much civility. Nay, Mr Milton, who seldom tasted wine, both because of his singular temperance and because of his gout, did more than once pledge Mr Cowley, who was indeed no hermit in diet. At last, being heated, Mr Milton begged that I would open the windows. "Nay," said I, "if you desire fresh air and coolness, what should hinder us, as the evening is fair, from sailing for an hour on the river?" To this they both cheerfully consented; and forth we walked, Mr Cowley and I leading Mr Milton between us, to the Temple Stairs. There we took a boat; and thence we were rowed up the river.

The wind was pleasant; the evening fine; the sky, the earth, and the water beautiful to look upon. But Mr Cowley and I held our peace, and said nothing of the gay sights around us, lest we should too feelingly remind Mr Milton of his calamity; whereof, however, he needed no monitor: for soon he said, sadly, "Ah, Mr Cowley, you are a happy man. What would I now give but for one more look at the sun, and the waters, and the gardens of this fair city!"

"I know not," said Mr Cowley, "whether we ought not rather to envy you for that which makes you to envy others: and that specially in this place, where all eyes which are not closed in blindness ought to become fountains of tears. What can we look upon which is not a memorial of change and sorrow, of fair things vanished, and evil things done? When I see the gate of Whitehall, and the stately pillars of the Banqueting House, I cannot choose but think of what I have there seen in former days, masques, and pageants, and dances, and smiles, and the waving of graceful heads, and the bounding of delicate feet. And then I turn to thoughts of other things, which even to remember makes me to blush and weep;—of the great black scaffold, and the axe and block, which were placed before those very windows; and the voice seems to sound in mine ears, the lawless and terrible voice, which cried out that the head of a king was the head of a traitor. There stands Westminster Hall, which who can look upon, and not tremble to think how time, and change, and death confound the councils of the wise, and beat down the weapons of the mighty? How have I seen it surrounded with tens of thousands of petitioners crying for justice and privilege! How have I heard it shake with fierce and proud words, which made the hearts of the people burn within them! Then it is blockaded by dragoons, and cleared by pikemen. And they who have conquered their master go forth trembling at the word of their servant. And yet a little while, and the usurper comes forth from it, in his robe of ermine, with the golden staff in one hand and the Bible in the other, amidst the roaring of the guns and the shouting of the people. And yet again a little while, and the doors are thronged with multitudes in black, and the hearse and the plumes come forth; and the tyrant is borne, in more than royal pomp, to a royal sepulchre. A few days more, and his head is fixed to rot on the pinnacles of that very hall where he sat on a throne in his life, and lay in state after his death. When I think on all these things, to look round me makes me sad at heart. True it is that God hath restored to us our old laws, and the rightful line of our kings. Yet, how I know not, but it seems to me that something is wanting—that our court hath not the old gravity, nor our people the old loyalty. These evil times, like the great deluge, have overwhelmed and confused all earthly things. And, even as those waters, though at last they abated, yet, as the learned write, destroyed all trace of the garden of Eden, so that its place hath never since been found, so hath this opening of all the flood-gates of political evil effaced all marks of the ancient political paradise."

"Sir, by your favour," said Mr Milton, "though, from many circumstances both of body and of fortune, I might plead fairer excuses for despondency than yourself, I yet look not so sadly either on the past or on the future. That a deluge hath passed over this our nation, I deny not. But I hold it not to be such a deluge as that of which you speak; but rather a blessed flood, like those of the Nile, which in its overflow doth indeed wash away ancient landmarks, and confound boundaries, and sweep away dwellings, yea, doth give birth to many foul and dangerous reptiles. Yet hence is the fulness of the granary, the beauty of the garden, the nurture of all living things.

"I remember well, Mr Cowley, what you have said concerning these things in your Discourse of the Government of Oliver Cromwell, which my friend Elwood read to me last year. Truly, for elegance and rhetoric, that essay is to be compared with the finest tractates of Isocrates and Cicero. But neither that nor any other book, nor any events, which with most men have, more than any book, weight and authority, have altered my opinion, that, of all assemblies that ever were in this world, the best and the most useful was our Long Parliament. I speak not this as wishing to provoke debate; which neither yet do I decline."

Mr Cowley was, as I could see, a little nettled. Yet, as he was a man of a kind disposition and a most refined courtesy, he put a force upon himself, and answered with more vehemence and quickness indeed than was his wont, yet not uncivilly. "Surely, Mr Milton, you speak not as you think. I am indeed one of those who believe that God hath reserved to himself the censure of kings, and that their crimes and oppressions are not to be resisted by the hands of their subjects. Yet can I easily find excuse for the violence of such as are stung to madness by grievous tyranny. But what shall we say for these men? Which of their just demands was not granted? Which even of their cruel and unreasonable requisitions, so as it were not inconsistent with all law and order, was refused? Had they not sent Strafford to the block and Laud to the Tower? Had they not destroyed the Courts of the High Commission and the Star Chamber? Had they not reversed the proceedings confirmed by the voices of the judges of England, in the matter of ship-money? Had they not taken from the king his ancient and most lawful power touching the order of knighthood? Had they not provided that, after their dissolution, triennial parliaments should be holden, and that their own power should continue till of their great condescension they should be pleased to resign it themselves? What more could they ask? Was it not enough that they had taken from their king all his oppressive powers, and many that were most salutary? Was it not enough that they had filled his council-board with his enemies, and his prisons with his adherents? Was it not enough that they had raised a furious multitude, to shout and swagger daily under the very windows of his royal palace? Was it not enough that they had taken from him the most blessed prerogative of princely mercy; that, complaining of intolerance themselves, they had denied all toleration to others; that they had urged, against forms, scruples childish as those of any formalist; that they had persecuted the least remnant of the popish rites with the fiercest bitterness of the popish spirit? Must they besides all this have full power to command his armies, and to massacre his friends?

"For military command, it was never known in any monarchy, nay, in any well ordered republic, that it was committed to the debates of a large and unsettled assembly. For their other requisition, that he should give up to their vengeance all who had defended the rights of his crown, his honour must have been ruined if he had complied. Is it not therefore plain that they desired these things only in order that, by refusing, his Majesty might give them a pretence for war?

"Men have often risen up against fraud, against cruelty, against rapine. But when before was it known that concessions were met with importunities, graciousness with insults, the open palm of bounty with the clenched fist of malice? Was it like trusty delegates of the Commons of England, and faithful stewards of their liberty and their wealth, to engage them for such causes in civil war, which both to liberty and to wealth is of all things the most hostile. Evil indeed must be the disease which is not more tolerable than such a medicine. Those who, even to save a nation from tyrants, excite it to civil war do in general but minister to it the same miserable kind of relief wherewith the wizards of Pharaoh mocked the Egyptian. We read that, when Moses had turned their waters into blood, those impious magicians, intending, not benefit to the thirsting people, but vain and emulous ostentation of their own art, did themselves also change into blood the water which the plague had spared. Such sad comfort do those who stir up war minister to the oppressed. But here where was the oppression? What was the favour which had not been granted? What was the evil which had not been removed? What further could they desire?"

"These questions," said Mr Milton, austerely, "have indeed often deceived the ignorant; but that Mr Cowley should have been so beguiled, I marvel. You ask what more the Parliament could desire? I will answer you in one word, security. What are votes, and statutes, and resolutions? They have no eyes to see, no hands to strike and avenge. They must have some safeguard from without. Many things, therefore, which in themselves were peradventure hurtful, was this Parliament constrained to ask, lest otherwise good laws and precious rights should be without defence. Nor did they want a great and signal example of this danger. I need not remind you that, many years before, the two Houses had presented to the king the Petition of Right, wherein were set down all the most valuable privileges of the people of this realm. Did not Charles accept it? Did he not declare it to be law? Was it not as fully enacted as ever were any of those bills of the Long Parliament concerning which you spoke? And were those privileges therefore enjoyed more fully by the people? No: the king did from that time redouble his oppressions as if to avenge himself for the shame of having been compelled to renounce them. Then were our estates laid under shameful impositions, our houses ransacked, our bodies imprisoned. Then was the steel of the hangman blunted with mangling the ears of harmless men. Then our very minds were fettered, and the iron entered into our souls. Then we were compelled to hide our hatred, our sorrow, and our scorn, to laugh with hidden faces at the mummery of Laud, to curse under our breath the tyranny of Wentworth.) Of old time it was well and nobly said, by one of our kings, that an Englishman ought to be as free as his thoughts. Our prince reversed the maxim; he strove to make our thoughts as much slaves as ourselves. To sneer at a Romish pageant, to miscall a lord's crest, were crimes for which there was no mercy. These were all the fruits which we gathered from those excellent laws of the former Parliament, from these solemn promises of the king. Were we to be deceived again? Were we again to give subsidies, and receive nothing but promises? Were we again to make wholesome statutes, and then leave them to be broken daily and hourly, until the oppressor should have squandered another supply, and should be ready for another perjury? You ask what they could desire which he had not already granted. Let me ask of you another question. What pledge could he give which he had not already violated? From the first year of his reign, whenever he had need of the purses of his Commons to support the revels of Buckingham or the processions of Laud, he had assured them that, as he was a gentleman and a king, he would sacredly preserve their rights. He had pawned those solemn pledges, and pawned them again and again; but when had he redeemed them? 'Upon my faith,'—'Upon my sacred word,'—'Upon the honour of a prince,'—came so easily from his lips, and dwelt so short a time on his mind that they were as little to be trusted as the 'By the hilts' of an Alsatian dicer.

"Therefore it is that I praise this Parliament for what else I might have condemned. If what he had granted had been granted graciously and readily, if what he had before promised had been faithfully observed, they could not be defended. It was because he had never yielded the worst abuse without a long struggle, and seldom without a large bribe; it was because he had no sooner disentangled himself from his troubles than he forgot his promises; and, more like a villainous huckster than a great king, kept both the prerogative and the large price which had been paid to him to forego it; it was because of these things that it was necessary and just to bind with forcible restraints one who could be bound neither by law nor honour. Nay, even while he was making those very concessions of which you speak, he betrayed his deadly hatred against the people and their friends. Not only did he, contrary to all that ever was deemed lawful in England, order that members of the Commons House of Parliament should be impeached of high treason at the bar of the Lords; thereby violating both the trial by jury and the privileges of the House; but, not content with breaking the law by his ministers, he went himself armed to assail it. In the birth-place and sanctuary of freedom, in the House itself, nay in the very chair of the speaker, placed for the protection of free speech and privilege, he sat, rolling his eyes round the benches, searching for those whose blood he desired, and singling out his opposers to the slaughter. This most foul outrage fails. Then again for the old arts. Then come gracious messages. Then come courteous speeches. Then is again mortgaged his often forfeited honour. He will never again violate the laws. He will respect their rights as if they were his own. He pledges the dignity of his crown; that crown which had been committed to him for the weal of his people, and which he never named, but that he might the more easily delude and oppress them.

"The power of the sword, I grant you, was not one to be permanently possessed by Parliament. Neither did that Parliament demand it as a permanent possession. They asked it only for temporary security. Nor can I see on what conditions they could safely make peace with that false and wicked king, save such as would deprive him of all power to injure.

"For civil war, that it is an evil I dispute not. But that it is the greatest of evils, that I stoutly deny. It doth indeed appear to the misjudging to be a worse calamity than bad government, because its miseries are collected together within a short space and time, and may easily at one view be taken in and perceived. But the misfortunes of nations ruled by tyrants, being distributed over many centuries and many places, as they are of greater weight and number, so are they of less display. When the Devil of tyranny hath gone into the body politic he departs not but with struggles, and foaming, and great convulsions. Shall he, therefore, vex it for ever, lest, in going out, he for a moment tear and rend it? Truly this argument touching the evils of war would better become my friend Elwood, or some other of the people called Quakers, than a courtier and a cavalier. It applies no more to this war than to all others, as well foreign as domestic, and, in this war, no more to the Houses than to the king; nay, not so much, since he by a little sincerity and moderation might have rendered that needless which their duty to God and man then enforced them to do."

"Pardon me, Mr Milton," said Mr Cowley; "I grieve to hear you speak thus of that good king. Most unhappy indeed he was, in that he reigned at a time when the spirit of the then living generation was for freedom, and the precedents of former ages for prerogative. His case was like to that of Christopher Columbus, when he sailed forth on an unknown ocean, and found that the compass, whereby he shaped his course, had shifted from the north pole whereto before it had constantly pointed. So it was with Charles. His compass varied; and therefore he could not tack aright. If he had been an absolute king he would doubtless, like Titus Vespasian, have been called the delight of the human race. If he had been a Doge of Venice, or a Stadtholder of Holland, he would never have outstepped the laws. But he lived when our government had neither clear definitions nor strong sanctions. Let, therefore, his faults be ascribed to the time. Of his virtues the praise is his own.

"Never was there a more gracious prince, or a more proper gentleman. In every pleasure he was temperate, in conversation mild and grave, in friendship constant, to his servants liberal, to his queen faithful and loving, in battle grave, in sorrow and captivity resolved, in death most Christian and forgiving.

"For his oppressions, let us look at the former history of this realm. James was never accounted a tyrant. Elizabeth is esteemed to have been the mother of her people. Were they less arbitrary? Did they never lay hands on the purses of their subjects but by Act of Parliament? Did they never confine insolent and disobedient men but in due course of law? Was the court of Star Chamber less active? Were the ears of libellers more safe? I pray you, let not king Charles be thus dealt with. It was enough that in his life he was tried for an alleged breach of laws which none ever heard named till they were discovered for his destruction. Let not his fame be treated as was his sacred and anointed body. Let not his memory be tried by principles found out *ex post facto*. Let us not judge by the spirit of one generation a man whose disposition had been formed by the temper and fashion of another."

"Nay, but conceive me, Mr Cowley," said Mr Milton; "inasmuch as, at the beginning of his reign, he imitated those who had governed before him, I blame him not. To expect that kings will, of their own free choice, abridge their prerogative, were argument of but slender wisdom. Whatever, therefore, lawless, unjust, or cruel, he either did or permitted during the first years of his reign, I pass by. But for what was done after that he had solemnly given his consent to the Petition of Right, where shall we find defence? Let it be supposed, which yet I concede not, that the tyranny of his father and of Queen Elizabeth had been no less rigorous than was his. But had his father, had that queen, sworn like him, to abstain from those rigours? Had they, like him, for good and valuable consideration, aliened their hurtful prerogatives? Surely not: from whatever excuse you can plead for him he had wholly excluded himself. The borders of countries, we know, are mostly the seats of perpetual wars and tumults. It was the same with the undefined frontiers, which of old separated privilege and prerogative. They were the debatable land of our polity. It was no marvel if, both on the one side and on the other, inroads were often made. But, when treaties have been concluded, spaces measured, lines drawn, landmarks set up, that which before might pass for innocent error or just reprisal becomes robbery, perjury, deadly sin. He knew not, you say, which of his powers were founded on ancient law, and which only on vicious example. But had he not read the Petition of Right? Had not proclamation been made from his throne, *Soit fait comme il est desiré?*

"For his private virtues they are beside the question. Remember you not," and Mr Milton smiled, but somewhat sternly, "what Dr Caius saith in the Merry Wives of Shakspeare? 'What shall the honest man do in my closet? There is no honest man that shall come in my closet.' Even so say I. There is no good man who shall make us his slaves. If he break his word to his people, is it a sufficient defence that he keeps it to his companions? If he oppress and extort all day, shall he be held blameless because he prayeth at night and morning? If he be insatiable in plunder and revenge, shall we pass it by because in meat and drink he is temperate? If he have lived like a tyrant, shall all be forgotten because he hath died like a martyr?

"He was a man, as I think, who had so much semblance of virtues as might make his vices most dangerous. He was not a tyrant after our wonted English model. The second Richard, the second and fourth Edwards, and the eighth Harry, were men profuse, gay, boisterous; lovers of women and of wine, of no outward sanctity or gravity. Charles was a ruler after the Italian fashion; grave, demure, of a solemn carriage, and a sober diet; as constant at prayers as a priest, as heedless of oaths as an atheist."

Mr Cowley answered somewhat sharply: "I am sorry, Sir, to hear you speak thus. I had hoped that the vehemence of spirit which was caused by these violent times had now abated. Yet, sure, Mr Milton, whatever you may think of the character of King Charles, you will not still justify his murder?"

"Sir," said Mr Milton, "I must have been of a hard and strange nature, if the vehemence which was imputed to me in my younger days had not been diminished by the afflictions wherewith it hath pleased Almighty God to chasten my age. I will not now defend all that I may heretofore have written. But this I say, that I perceive not wherefore a king should be exempted from all punishment. Is it just that where most is given least should be required? Or politic that where there is the greatest power to injure there should be no danger to restrain? But, you will say, there is no such law. Such a law there is. There is the law of selfpreservation written by God himself on our hearts. There is the primal compact and bond of society, not graven on stone, or sealed with wax, nor put down on parchment, nor set forth in any express form of words by men when of old they came together; but implied in the very act that they so came together, pre-supposed in all subsequent law, not to be repealed by any authority, nor invalidated by being omitted in any code ; inasmuch as from thence are all codes and all authority.

"Neither do I well see wherefore you cavaliers, and, indeed, many of us whom you merrily call Roundheads, distinguish between those who fought against King Charles, and specially after the second commission given to Sir Thomas Fairfax, and those who condemned him to death. Sure, if his person were inviolable, it was as wicked to lift the sword against it at Naseby as the axe at Whitehall. If his life might justly be taken, why not in course of trial as well as by right of war?

"Thus much in general as touching the right. But, for the execution of King Charles in particular, I will not now undertake to defend it. Death is inflicted, not that the culprit may die, but that the state may be thereby advantaged. And, from all that I know, I think that the death of King Charles hath more hindered than advanced the liberties of England.

"First, he left an heir. He was in captivity. The heir was in freedom. He was odious to the Scots. The heir was favoured by them. To kill the captive therefore, whereby the heir, in the apprehension of all royalists, became forthwith king—what was it, in truth, but to set their captive free, and to give him besides other great advantages?

"Next, it was a deed most odious to the people, and not only to your party, but to many among ourselves ; and, as it is perilous for any government to outrage the public opinion, so most was it perilous for a government which had from that opinion alone its birth, its nurture, and its defence.

"Yet doth not this properly belong to our dispute ; nor can these faults be justly charged upon that most renowned Parliament. For, as you know, the high court of justice was not established until the House had been purged of such members as were adverse to the army, and brought wholly under the control of the chief officers."

"And who," said Mr Cowley, "levied that army? Who commissioned those officers? Was not the fate of the Commons as justly deserved as was that of Diomedes, who was devoured by those horses whom he had himself taught to feed on the flesh and blood of men? How could they hope that others would respect laws which they had themselves insulted ; that swords which had been drawn against the prerogatives of the king would be put up at an ordinance of the Commons? It was believed, of old, that there were some devils easily raised but never to be laid ; insomuch that, if a magician called them up, he should be forced to find them always some employment ; for, though they would do all his bidding, yet, if he left them but for one moment without some work of evil to perform, they would turn their claws against himself. Such a fiend is an army. They who evoke it cannot dismiss it. They are at once its masters and its slaves. Let them not fail to find for it task after task of blood and rapine. Let them not leave it for a moment in repose, lest it tear them in pieces.

"Thus was it with that famous assembly. They formed a force which they could neither govern nor resist. They made it powerful. They made it fanatical. As if military insolence were not of itself sufficiently dangerous, they heightened it with spiritual pride,—they encouraged their soldiers to rave from the tops of tubs against the men of Belial, till every trooper thought himself a prophet. They taught them to abuse popery, till every drummer fancied that he was as infallible as a pope.

"Then it was that religion changed her nature. She was no longer the parent of arts and letters, of wholesome knowledge, of innocent pleasures, of blessed household smiles. In their place came sour faces, whining voices, the chattering of fools, the yells of madmen. Then men fasted from meat and drink, who fasted not from bribes and blood. Then men frowned at stage-plays, who smiled at massacres. Then men preached against painted faces, who felt no remorse for their own most painted lives. Religion had been a pole-star to light and to guide. It was now more like to that ominous star in the book of the Apocalypse, which fell from heaven upon the fountains and rivers and changed them into wormwood ; for even so did it descend from its high and celestial dwelling-place to plague this earth, and to turn into bitterness all that was sweet, and into poison all that was nourishing.

"Therefore it was not strange that such things should follow. They who had closed the barriers of London against the king could not defend them against their own creatures. They who had so stoutly cried for privilege, when that prince, most unadvisedly no doubt, came among them to demand their members, durst not wag their fingers when Oliver filled their hall with soldiers, gave their mace to a corporal, put their keys in his pocket, and drove them forth with base terms, borrowed half from the conventicle and half from the ale-house. Then were we, like the trees of the forest in holy writ, given over to the rule of the bramble ; then from the basest of the shrubs came forth the fire which devoured the cedars of Lebanon. We bowed down before a man of mean birth, of ungraceful demeanour, of stammering and most vulgar utterance, of scandalous and notorious hypocrisy. Our laws were made and unmade at his pleasure ; the constitution of our Parliaments changed by his writ and proclamation ; our persons imprisoned ; our property plundered ; our lands and houses overrun with soldiers ; and the great charter itself was but argument for a scurrilous jest ; and for all this we may thank that Parliament ; for never, unless they had so violently shaken the vessel, could such foul dregs have risen to the top."

Then answered Mr Milton : "What you have now said comprehends so great a number of subjects, that it would require, not an evening's sail on the Thames, but rather a voyage to the Indies, accurately to treat of all : yet, in as few words as I may, I will explain my sense of these matters.

"First, as to the army. An army, as you have well set forth, is always a weapon dangerous to those who use it ; yet he who falls among thieves spares not to fire his musquetoon, because he may be slain if it burst in his hand. Nor must states refrain from defending themselves, lest their defenders should at last turn against them. Nevertheless, against this danger statesmen should carefully provide ; and, that they may do so, they should take especial care that neither the officers nor the soldiers do forget that they are also citizens. I do believe that the English army would have continued to obey the parliament with all duty, but for one act, which, as it was in intention, in seeming, and in immediate effect, worthy to be compared with the most famous in history, so was it, in its final consequence, most injurious. I speak of that ordinance called the *self-denying*, and of the new model of the army. By those measures the Commons gave up the command of their forces into the hands of men who were not of themselves. Hence, doubtless, derived no small honour to that noble assembly, which sacrificed to the hope of public good the assurance of private advantage. And, as to the conduct of the war, the scheme prospered. Witness the battle of Naseby, and the memorable exploits of Fairfax in the west. But thereby the Parliament lost that hold on the soldiers and that power to control them, which they retained while every regiment was commanded by their own members. Politicians there be, who would wholly divide the legislative from the executive power. In the golden age this may have succeeded; in the millennium it may succeed again. But, where great armies and great taxes are required, there the executive government must always hold a great authority, which authority, that it may not oppress and destroy the legislature, must be in some manner blended with it. The leaders of foreign mercenaries have always been most dangerous to a country. The officers of native armies, deprived of the civil privileges of other men, are as much to be feared. This was the great error of that Parliament: and, though an error it were, it was an error generous, virtuous, and more to be deplored than censured.

"Hence came the power of the army and its leaders, and especially of that most famous leader, whom both in our conversation to-day, and in that discourse whereon I before touched, you have, in my poor opinion, far too roughly handled. Wherefore you speak contemptibly of his parts I know not; but I suspect that you are not free from the error common to studious and speculative men. Because Oliver was an ungraceful orator, and never said, either in public or private, anything memorable, you will have it that he was of a mean capacity. Sure this is unjust. Many men have there been ignorant of letters, without wit, without eloquence, who yet had the wisdom to devise, and the courage to perform, that which they lacked language to explain. Such men often, in troubled times, have worked out the deliverance of nations and their own greatness, not by logic, not by rhetoric, but by wariness in success, by calmness in danger, by fierce and stubborn resolution in all adversity. The hearts of men are their books; events are their tutors; great actions are their eloquence: and such an one, in my judgment, was his late Highness, who, if none were to treat his name scornfully now shook not at the sound of it while he lived, would, by very few, be mentioned otherwise than with reverence. His own deeds shall avouch him for a great statesman, a great soldier, a true lover of his country, a merciful and generous conqueror.

"For his faults, let us reflect that they who seem to lead are oftentimes most constrained to follow. They who will mix with men, and especially they who will govern them, must in many things obey them. They who will yield to no such conditions may be hermits, but cannot be generals and statesmen. If a man will walk straight forward without turning to the right or the left, he must walk in a desert, and not in Cheapside. Thus was he enforced to do many things which jumped not with his inclination nor made for his honour; because the army, on which alone he could depend for power and life, might not otherwise be contented. And I, for mine own part, marvel less that he sometimes was fain to indulge their violence than that he could so often restrain it.

"In that he dissolved the Parliament, I praise him. It then was so diminished in numbers, as well by the death as by the exclusion of members, that it was no longer the same assembly ; and, if at that time it had made itself perpetual, we should have been governed, not by an English House of Commons, but by a Venetian Council.

"If in his following rule he overstepped the laws, I pity rather than condemn him. He may be compared to that Mæandrius of Samos, of whom Herodotus saith, in his Thalia, that, wishing to be of all men the most just, he was not able ; for after the death of Polycrates he offered freedom to the people ; and not till certain of them threatened to call him to a reckoning for what he had formerly done, did he change his purpose, and make himself a tyrant, lest he should be treated as a criminal.

"Such was the case of Oliver. He gave to his country a form of government so free and admirable that, in near six thousand years, human wisdom hath never devised any more excellent contrivance for human happiness. To himself he reserved so little power that it would scarcely have sufficed for his safety, and it is a marvel that it could suffice for his ambition. When, after that, he found that the members of his Parliament disputed his right even to that small authority which he had kept, when he might have kept all, then indeed I own that he began to govern by the sword those who would not suffer him to govern by the law.

"But, for the rest, what sovereign was ever more princely in pardoning injuries, in conquering enemies, in extending the dominions and the renown of his people? What sea, what shore did he not mark with imperishable memorials of his friendship or his vengeance? The gold of Spain, the steel of Sweden, the ten thousand sails of Holland, availed nothing against him. While every foreign state trembled at our arms, we sat secure from all assault. War, which often so strangely troubles both husbandry and commerce, never silenced the song of our reapers, or the sound of our looms. Justice was equally administered ; God was freely worshipped.

"Now look at that which we have taken in exchange. With the restored king have come over to us vices of every sort, and most the basest and most shameful,—lust without love—servitude without loyalty—foulness of speech—dishonesty of dealing—grinning contempt of all things good and generous. The throne is surrounded by men whom the former Charles would have spurned from his footstool. The altar is served by slaves whose knees are supple to every being but God. Rhymers, whose books the hangman should burn, pandars, actors, and buffoons, these drink a health and throw a main with the King ; these have stars on their breasts and gold sticks in their hands ; these shut out from his presence the best and bravest of those who bled for his house. Even so doth God visit those who know not how to value freedom. He gives them over to the tyranny which they have desired, *Ἵνα πάντες ἐπαύρωνται βασιλῆος.*"

"I will not," said Mr Cowley, "dispute with you on this argument. But, if it be as you say, how can you maintain that England hath been so greatly advantaged by the rebellion ?"

"Understand me rightly, Sir," said Mr Milton. "This nation is not given over to slavery and vice. We tasted indeed the fruits of liberty before they had well ripened. Their flavour was harsh and bitter ; and we turned from them with loathing to the sweeter poisons of servitude. This is but for a time. England is sleeping on the lap of Dalilah, traitorously chained, but not yet shorn of strength. Let the cry be once heard—the Philistines be upon thee; and at once that sleep will be broken, and those chains will be as flax in the fire. The great Parliament hath left behind it in our hearts and minds a hatred of tyrants, a just knowledge of our rights, a scorn of vain and deluding names; and that the revellers of Whitehall shall surely find. The sun is darkened; but it is only for a moment: it is but an eclipse; though all birds of evil omen have begun to scream, and all ravenous beasts have gone forth to prey, thinking it to be midnight. Woe to them if they be abroad when the rays again shine forth!

"The king hath judged ill. Had he been wise he would have remembered that he owed his restoration only to confusions which had wearied us out, and made us eager for repose. He would have known that the folly and perfidy of a prince would restore to the good old cause many hearts which had been alienated thence by the turbulence of factions; for, if I know aught of history, or of the heart of man, he will soon learn that the last champion of the people was not destroyed when he murdered Vane, nor seduced when he beguiled Fairfax."

Mr Cowley seemed to me not to take much amiss what Mr Milton had said touching that thankless court, which had indeed but poorly requited his own good service. He only said, therefore, "Another rebellion! Alas! alas! Mr Milton! If there be no choice but between despotism and anarchy, I prefer despotism."

"Many men," said Mr Milton, "have floridly and ingeniously compared anarchy and despotism; but they who so amuse themselves do but look at separate parts of that which is truly one great whole. Each is the cause and the effect of the other; the evils of either are the evils of both. Thus do states move on in the same eternal cycle, which, from the remotest point, brings them back again to the same sad starting-post: and, till both those who govern and those who obey shall learn and mark this great truth, men can expect little through the future, as they have known little through the past, save vicissitudes of extreme evils, alternately producing and produced.

"When will rulers learn that, where liberty is not, security and order can never be? We talk of absolute power; but all power hath limits, which, if not fixed by the moderation of the governors, will be fixed by the force of the governed. Sovereigns may send their opposers to dungeons; they may clear out a senate-house with soldiers; they may enlist armies of spies; they may hang scores of the disaffected in chains at every cross road; but what power shall stand in that frightful time when rebellion hath become a less evil than endurance? Who shall dissolve that terrible tribunal, which, in the hearts of the oppressed, denounces against the oppressor the doom of its wild justice? Who shall repeal the law of selfdefence? What arms or discipline shall resist the strength of famine and despair? How often were the ancient Cæsars dragged from their golden palaces, stripped of their purple robes, mangled, stoned, defiled with filth, pierced with hooks, hurled into Tiber? How often have the Eastern Sultans perished by the sabres of their own janissaries, or the bow-strings of their own mutes! For no power which is not limited by laws can ever be protected by them. Small, therefore, is the wisdom of those who would fly to servitude as if it were a refuge from commotion; for anarchy is the sure consequence of tyranny. That governments may be safe, nations must be free. Their passions must have an outlet provided, lest they make one.

"When I was at Naples, I went with Signor Manso, a gentleman of excellent parts and breeding, who had been the familiar friend of that famous poet Torquato Tasso, to see the burning mountain Vesuvius. I wondered how the peasants could venture to dwell so fearlessly and cheerfully on its sides, when the lava was flowing from its summit ; but Manso smiled, and told me that when the fire descends freely they retreat before it without haste or fear. They can tell how fast it will move, and how far ; and they know, moreover, that, though it may work some little damage, it will soon cover the fields over which it hath passed with rich vineyards and sweet flowers. But, when the flames are pent up in the mountain, then it is that they have reason to fear ; then it is that the earth sinks and the sea swells ; then cities are swallowed up ; and their place knoweth them no more. So it is in politics : where the people is most closely restrained, there it gives the greatest shocks to peace and order ; therefore would I say to all kings, let your demagogues lead crowds, lest they lead armies ; let them bluster, lest they massacre ; a little turbulence is, as it were, the rainbow of the state ; it shows indeed that there is a passing shower ; but it is a pledge that there shall be no deluge."

"This is true," said Mr Cowley ; "yet these admonitions are not less needful to subjects than to sovereigns."

"Surely," said Mr Milton ; "and,that I may end this long debate with a few words in which we shall both agree, I hold that, as freedom is the only safeguard of governments, so are order and moderation generally necessary to preserve freedom. Even the vainest opinions of men are not to be outraged by those who propose to themselves the happiness of men for their end, and who must work with the passions of men for their means. The blind reverence for things ancient is indeed so foolish that it might make a wise man laugh, if it were not also sometimes so mischievous that it would rather make a good man weep. Yet, since it may not be wholly cured it must be discreetly indulged ; and therefore those who would amend evil laws should consider rather how much it may be safe to spare, than how much it may be possible to change. Have you not heard that men who have been shut up for many years in dungeons shrink if they see the light, and fall down if their irons be struck off? And so, when nations have long been in the house of bondage, the chains which have crippled them are necessary to support them, the darkness which hath weakened their sight is necessary to preserve it. Therefore release them not too rashly, lest they curse their freedom and pine for their prison.

"I think indeed that the renowned Parliament, of which we have talked so much, did show, until it became subject to the soldiers, a singular and admirable moderation, in such times scarcely to be hoped, and most worthy to be an example to all that shall come after. But on this argument I have said enough : and I will therefore only pray to Almighty God that those who shall, in future times stand forth in defence of our liberties, as well civil as religious, may adorn the good cause by mercy, prudence, and soberness, to the glory of his name and the happiness and honour of the English people."

And so ended that discourse ; and not long after we were set on shore again at the Temple Gardens, and there parted company : and the same evening I took notes of what had been said, which I have here more fully set down, from regard both to the fame of the men, and the importance of the subject-matter.

ON THE ATHENIAN ORATORS.

(August 1824.)

> " To the famous orators repair,
> Those ancient, whose resistless eloquence
> Wielded at will that fierce democratie,
> Shook the arsenal, and fulmined over Greece
> To Macedon and Artaxerxes' throne."—Milton.

The celebrity of the great classical writers is confined within no limits, except those which separate civilised from savage man. Their works are the common property of every polished nation. They have furnished subjects for the painter, and models for the poet. In the minds of the educated classes throughout Europe, their names are indissolubly associated with the endearing recollections of childhood,—the old schoolroom,—the dog-eared grammar,—the first prize,—the tears so often shed and so quickly dried. So great is the veneration with which they are regarded, that even the editors and commentators who perform the lowest menial offices to their memory, are considered, like the equerries and chamberlains of sovereign princes, as entitled to a high rank in the table of literary precedence. It is, therefore, somewhat singular that their productions should so rarely have been examined on just and philosophical principles of criticism.

The ancient writers themselves afford us but little assistance. When they particularise, they are commonly trivial: when they would generalise, they become indistinct. An exception must, indeed, be made in favour of Aristotle. Both in analysis and in combination, that great man was without a rival. No philosopher has ever possessed, in an equal degree, the talent either of separating established systems into their primary elements, or of connecting detached phenomena in harmonious systems. He was the great fashioner of the intellectual chaos; he changed its darkness into light, and its discord into order. He brought to literary researches the same vigour and amplitude of mind to which both physical and metaphysical science are so greatly indebted. His fundamental principles of criticism are excellent. To cite only a single instance:—the doctrine which he established, that poetry is an imitative art, when justly understood, is to the critic what the compass is to the navigator. With it he may venture upon the most extensive excursions. Without it he must creep cautiously along the coast, or lose himself in a trackless expanse, and trust, at best, to the guidance of an occasional star. It is a discovery which changes a caprice into a science.

The general propositions of Aristotle are valuable. But the merit of the superstructure bears no proportion to that of the foundation. This is partly to be ascribed to the character of the philosopher, who, though qualified to do all that could be done by the resolving and combining powers of the understanding, seems not to have possessed much of sensibility or imagination. Partly, also, it may be attributed to the deficiency of materials. The great works of genius which then existed were not either sufficiently numerous or sufficiently varied to enable any man to form a perfect code of literature. To require that a critic should conceive classes of composition which had never existed, and then investigate their principles, would be as unreasonable as the demand of Nebuchadnezzar, who expected his magicians first to tell him his dream and then to interpret it.

With all his deficiencies, Aristotle was the most enlightened and profound critic of antiquity. Dionysius was far from possessing the same exquisite subtilty, or the same vast comprehension. But he had access to a much greater number of specimens; and he had devoted himself, as it appears, more exclusively to the study of elegant literature. His peculiar judgments are of more value than his general principles. He is only the historian of literature. Aristotle is its philosopher.

Quintilian applied to general literature the same principles by which he had been accustomed to judge of the declamations of his pupils. He looks for nothing but rhetoric, and rhetoric not of the highest order. He speaks coldly of the incomparable works of Æschylus. He admires, beyond expression, those inexhaustible mines of common-places, the plays of Euripides. He bestows a few vague words on the poetical character of Homer. He then proceeds to consider him merely as an orator. An orator Homer doubtless was, and a great orator. But surely nothing is more remarkable, in his admirable works, than the art with which his oratorical powers are made subservient to the purposes of poetry. Nor can I think Quintilian a great critic in his own province. Just as are many of his remarks, beautiful as are many of his illustrations, we can perpetually detect in his thoughts that flavour which the soil of despotism generally communicates to all the fruits of genius. Eloquence was, in his time, little more than a condiment which served to stimulate in a despot the jaded appetite for panegyric, an amusement for the travelled nobles and the blue-stocking matrons of Rome. It is, therefore, with him, rather a sport than a war; it is a contest of foils, not of swords. He appears to think more of the grace of the attitude than of the direction and vigour of the thrust. It must be acknowledged, in justice to Quintilian, that this is an error to which Cicero has too often given the sanction, both of his precept and of his example.

Longinus seems to have had great sensibility, but little discrimination. He gives us eloquent sentences, but no principles. It was happily said that Montesquieu ought to have changed the name of his book from *L'Esprit des Lois* to *L'Esprit sur les Lois*. In the same manner the philosopher of Palmyra ought to have entitled his famous work, not "Longinus on the Sublime," but "The Sublimities of Longinus." The origin of the sublime is one of the most curious and interesting subjects of inquiry that can occupy the attention of a critic. In our own country it has been discussed, with great ability, and, I think, with very little success, by Burke and Dugald Stuart. Longinus dispenses himself from all investigations of this nature, by telling his friend Terentianus that he already knows everything that can be said upon the question. It is to be regretted that Terentianus did not impart some of his knowledge to his instructor: for from Longinus we learn only that sublimity means height —or elevation.* This name, so commodiously vague, is applied indifferently to the noble prayer of Ajax in the Iliad, and to a passage of Plato about the human body, as full of conceits as an ode of Cowley. Having no fixed standard, Longinus is right only by accident. He is rather a fancier than a critic.

Modern writers have been prevented by many causes from supplying the deficiencies of their classical predecessors. At the time of the revival of literature, no man could, without great and painful labour, acquire an accurate and elegant knowledge of the ancient languages. And, unfortunately, those grammatical and philological studies, without which it was impossible to understand the great works of Athenian and Roman genius, have a tendency to contract the views and deaden the sensibility of those who follow them with extreme assiduity. A powerful mind, which has been long employed in such studies, may be compared to the gigantic spirit in the Arabian tale, who was persuaded to contract himself to small dimensions in order to enter within the enchanted vessel, and, when his prison had been closed upon him, found himself unable to escape from the narrow boundaries to the measure of which he had reduced his stature. When the means have long been the objects of application, they are naturally substituted for the end. It was said, by Eugene of Savoy, that the greatest generals have commonly been those who have been at once raised to command, and introduced to the great operations of war, without being employed in the petty calculations and manœuvres which employ the time of an inferior officer. In literature the principle is equally sound. The great tactics of criticism will, in general, be best understood by those who have not had much practice in drilling syllables and particles.

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* Ἀκρότης καὶ ἐξοχή τις λόγων ἐστὶ τὰ ὕψη.

I remember to have observed among the French Anas a ludicrous instance of this. A scholar, doubtless of great learning, recommends the study of some long Latin treatise, of which I now forget the name, on the religion, manners, government, and language of the early Greeks. "For there," says he, "you will learn everything of importance that is contained in the Iliad and Odyssey, without the trouble of reading two such tedious books." Alas! it had not occurred to the poor gentleman that all the knowledge to which he attached so much value was useful only as it illustrated the great poems which he despised, and would be as worthless for any other purpose as the mythology of Caffraria, or the vocabulary of Otaheite.

Of those scholars who have disdained to confine themselves to verbal criticism few have been successful. The ancient languages have, generally, a magical influence on their faculties. They were "fools called into a circle by Greek invocations." The Iliad and Æneid were to them not books but curiosities, or rather reliques. They no more admired those works for their merits than a good Catholic venerates the house of the Virgin at Loretto for its architecture. Whatever was classical was good. Homer was a great poet, and so was Callimachus. The epistles of Cicero were fine, and so were those of Phalaris. Even with respect to questions of evidence they fell into the same error. The authority of all narrations, written in Greek or Latin, was the same with them. It never crossed their minds that the lapse of five hundred years, or the distance of five hundred leagues, could affect the accuracy of a narration;—that Livy could be a less veracious historian than Polybius;—or that Plutarch could know less about the friends of Xenophon than Xenophon himself. Deceived by the distance of time, they seem to consider all the Classics as contemporaries; just as I have known people in England, deceived by the distance of place, take it for granted that all persons who live in India are neighbours, and ask an inhabitant of Bombay about the health of an acquaintance at Calcutta. It is to be hoped that no barbarian deluge will ever again pass over Europe. But should such a calamity happen, it seems not improbable that some future Rollin or Gillies will compile a history of England from Miss Porter's Scottish Chiefs, Miss Lee's Recess, and Sir Nathaniel Wraxall's Memoirs.

It is surely time that ancient literature should be examined in a different manner, without pedantical prepossessions, but with a just allowance, at the same time, for the difference of circumstances and manners. I am far from pretending to the knowledge or ability which such a task would require. All that I mean to offer is a collection of desultory remarks upon a most interesting portion of Greek literature.

It may be doubted whether any compositions which have ever been produced in the world are equally perfect in their kind with the great Athenian orations. Genius is subject to the same laws which regulate the production of cotton and molasses. The supply adjusts itself to the demand. The quantity may be diminished by restrictions, and multiplied by bounties. The singular excellence to which eloquence attained at Athens is to be mainly attributed to the influence which it exerted there. In turbulent times, under a constitution purely democratic, among a people educated exactly to that point at which men are most susceptible of strong and sudden impressions, acute, but not sound reasoners, warm in their feelings, unfixed in their principles, and passionate admirers of fine composition, oratory received such encouragement as it has never since obtained.

The taste and knowledge of the Athenian people was a favourite object of the contemptuous derision of Samuel Johnson; a man who knew nothing of Greek literature beyond the common school-books, and who seems to have brought to what he had read scarcely more than the discernment of a common school-boy. He used to assert, with that arrogant absurdity which, in spite of his great abilities and virtues, renders him, perhaps the most ridiculous character in literary history, that Demosthenes spoke to a people of brutes;—to a barbarous people;—that there could have been no civilisation before the invention of printing. Johnson was a keen but a very narrow-minded observer of mankind. He perpetually confounded their general nature with their particular circumstances. He knew London intimately. The sagacity of his remarks on its society is perfectly astonishing. But Fleet Street was the world to him. He saw that Londoners who did not read were profoundly ignorant; and he inferred that a Greek, who had few or no books, must have been as uninformed as one of Mr Thrale's draymen.

There seems to be, on the contrary, every reason to believe, that, in general intelligence, the Athenian populace far surpassed the lower orders of any community that has ever existed. It must be considered, that to be a citizen was to be a legislator,—a soldier,—a judge,—one upon whose voice might depend the fate of the wealthiest tributary state, of the most eminent public man. The lowest offices, both of agriculture and of trade, were, in common, performed by slaves. The commonwealth supplied its meanest members with the support of life, the opportunity of leisure, and the means of amusement. Books were indeed few: but they were excellent; and they were accurately known. It is not by turning over libraries, but by repeatedly perusing and intently contemplating a few great models, that the mind is best disciplined. A man of letters must now read much that he soon forgets, and much from which he learns nothing worthy to be remembered. The best works employ, in general, but a small portion of his time. Demosthenes is said to have transcribed six times the history of Thucydides. If he had been a young politician of the present age, he might in the same space of time have skimmed innumerable newspapers and pamphlets. I do not condemn that desultory mode of study which the state of things, in our day, renders a matter of necessity. But I may be allowed to doubt whether the changes on which the admirers of modern institutions delight to dwell have improved our condition so much in reality as in appearance. Rumford, it is said, proposed to the Elector of Bavaria a scheme for feeding his soldiers at a much cheaper rate than formerly. His plan was simply to compel them to masticate their food thoroughly. A small quantity, thus eaten, would, according to that famous projector, afford more sustenance than a large meal hastily devoured. I do not know how Rumford's proposition was received ; but to the mind, I believe, it will be found more nutritious to digest a page than to devour a volume.

Books, however, were the least part of the education of an Athenian citizen. Let us, for a moment, transport ourselves in thought, to that glorious city. Let us imagine that we are entering its gates, in the time of its power and glory. A crowd is assembled round a portico. All are gazing with delight at the entablature ; for Phidias is putting up the frieze. We turn into another street ; a rhapsodist is reciting there : men, women, children are thronging round him : the tears are running down their cheeks : their eyes are fixed : their very breath is still ; for he is telling how Priam fell at the feet of Achilles, and kissed those hands,—the terrible—the murderous,—which had slain so many of his sons.* We enter the public place ; there is a ring of youths, all leaning forward, with sparkling eyes, and gestures of expectation. Socrates is pitted against the famous atheist, from Ionia, and has just brought him to a contradiction in terms. But we are interrupted. The herald is crying—"Room for the Prytanes." The general assembly is to meet. The people are swarming in on every side. Proclamation is made—"Who wishes to speak?" There is a shout, and a clapping of hands : Pericles is mounting the stand. Then for a play of Sophocles ; and away to sup with Aspasia. I know of no modern university which has so excellent a system of education.

Knowledge thus acquired and opinions thus formed were, indeed, likely to be, in some respects, defective. Propositions which are advanced in discourse generally result from a partial view of the question, and cannot be kept under examination long enough to be corrected. Men of great conversational powers almost universally practise a sort of lively sophistry and exaggeration, which deceives, for the moment, both themselves and their auditors. Thus we see doctrines, which cannot bear a close inspection, triumph perpetually in drawing-rooms, in debating societies, and even in legislative or judicial assemblies. To the conversational education of the Athenians I am inclined to attribute the great looseness of reasoning which is remarkable in most of their scientific writings. Even the most illogical of modern writers would stand perfectly aghast at the puerile fallacies which seem to have deluded some of the greatest men of antiquity. Sir Thomas Lethbridge would stare at the political economy of Xenophon ; and the author of *Soirées de Pétersbourg* would be ashamed of some of the metaphysical arguments of Plato. But the very circumstances which retarded the growth of science were peculiarly favourable to the cultivation of eloquence. From the early habit of taking a share in animated discussion the intelligent student would derive that readiness of resource, that copiousness of language, and that knowledge of the temper and understanding of an audience, which are far more valuable to an orator than the greatest logical powers.

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* ———————— *καὶ κύσε χεῖρας,*
δεινὰς, ἀνδροφόνους, αἵ οἱ πολέας κτάνον υἷας.

Horace has prettily compared poems to those paintings of which the effect varies as the spectator changes his stand. The same remark applies with at least equal justice to speeches. They must be read with the temper of those to whom they were addressed, or they must necessarily appear to offend against the laws of taste and reason; as the finest picture, seen in a light different from that for which it was designed, will appear fit only for a sign. This is perpetually forgotten by those who criticise oratory. Because they are reading at leisure, pausing at every line, reconsidering every argument, they forget that the hearers were hurried from point to point too rapidly to detect the fallacies through which they were conducted; that they had no time to disentangle sophisms, or to notice slight inaccuracies of expression; that elaborate excellence, either of reasoning or of language, would have been absolutely thrown away. To recur to the analogy of the sister art, these connoisseurs examine a panorama through a microscope, and quarrel with a scene-painter because he does not give to his work the exquisite finish of Gerard Dow.

Oratory is to be estimated on principles different from those which are applied to other productions. Truth is the object of philosophy and history. Truth is the object even of those works which are peculiarly called works of fiction, but which, in fact, bear the same relation to history which algebra bears to arithmetic. The merit of poetry, in its wildest forms, still consists in its truth,—truth conveyed to the understanding, not directly by the words, but circuitously by means of imaginative associations, which serve as its conductors. The object of oratory alone is not truth, but persuasion. The admiration of the multitude does not make Moore a greater poet than Coleridge, or Beattie a greater philosopher than Berkeley. But the criterion of eloquence is different. A speaker who exhausts the whole philosophy of a question, who displays every grace of style, yet produces no effect on his audience, may be a great essayist, a great statesman, a great master of composition; but he is not an orator. If he miss the mark, it makes no difference whether he have taken aim too high or too low.

The effect of the great freedom of the press in England has been, in a great measure, to destroy this distinction, and to leave among us little of what I call Oratory Proper. Our legislators, our candidates, on great occasions even our advocates, address themselves less to the audience than to the reporters. They think less of the few hearers than of the innumerable readers. At Athens the case was different; there the only object of the speaker was immediate conviction and persuasion. He, therefore, who would justly appreciate the merit of the Grecian orators should place himself, as nearly as possible, in the situation of their auditors: he should divest himself of his modern feelings and acquirements, and make the prejudices and interests of the Athenian citizen his own. He who studies their works in this spirit will find that many of those things which, to an English reader, appear to be blemishes,—the frequent violation of those excellent rules of evidence by which our courts of law are regulated,—the introduction of extraneous matter,—the reference to considerations of political expediency in judicial investigations,—the assertions, without proof,—the passionate entreaties,—the furious invectives,—are really proofs of the prudence and address of the speakers.

He must not dwell maliciously on arguments or phrases, but acquiesce in his first impressions. It requires repeated perusal and reflection to decide rightly on any other portion of literature. But with respect to works of which the merit depends on their instantaneous effect the most hasty judgment is likely to be best.

The history of eloquence at Athens is remarkable. From a very early period great speakers had flourished there. Pisistratus and Themistocles are said to have owed much of their influence to their talents for debate. We learn, with more certainty, that Pericles was distinguished by extraordinary oratorical powers. The substance of some of his speeches is transmitted to us by Thucydides; and that excellent writer has doubtless faithfully reported the general line of his arguments. But the manner, which in oratory is of at least as much consequence as the matter, was of no importance to his narration. It is evident that he has not attempted to preserve it. Throughout his work, every speech on every subject, whatever may have been the character of the dialect of the speaker, is in exactly the same form. The grave king of Sparta, the furious demagogue of Athens, the general encouraging his army, the captive supplicating for his life, all are represented as speakers in one unvaried style,—a style moreover wholly unfit for oratorical purposes. His mode of reasoning is singularly elliptical,—in reality most consecutive,—yet in appearance often incoherent. His meaning, in itself sufficiently perplexing, is compressed into the fewest possible words. His great fondness for antithetical expression has not a little conduced to this effect. Every one must have observed how much more the sense is condensed in the verses of Pope and his imitators, who never ventured to continue the same clause from couplet to couplet, than in those of poets who allow themselves that license. Every artificial division, which is strongly marked, and which frequently recurs, has the same tendency. The natural and perspicuous expression which spontaneously rises to the mind will often refuse to accommodate itself to such a form. It is necessary either to expand it into weakness, or to compress it into almost impenetrable density. The latter is generally the choice of an able man, and was assuredly the choice of Thucydides.

It is scarcely necessary to say that such speeches could never have been delivered. They are perhaps among the most difficult passages in the Greek language, and would probably have been scarcely more intelligible to an Athenian auditor than to a modern reader. Their obscurity was acknowledged by Cicero, who was as intimate with the literature and language of Greece as the most accomplished of its natives, and who seems to have held a respectable rank among the Greek authors. Their difficulty to a modern reader lies, not in the words, but in the reasoning. A dictionary is of far less use in studying them than a clear head and a close attention to the context. They are valuable to the scholar as displaying, beyond almost any other compositions, the powers of the finest of languages : they are valuable to the philosopher as illustrating the morals and manners of a most interesting age : they abound in just thought and energetic expression. But they do not enable us to form any accurate opinion on the merits of the early Greek orators.

Though it cannot be doubted that, before the Persian wars, Athens had produced eminent speakers, yet the period during which eloquence most flourished among her citizens was by no means that of her greatest power and glory. It commenced at the close of the Peloponnesian war. In fact, the steps by which Athenian oratory approached to its finished excellence seem to have been almost contemporaneous with those by which the Athenian character and the Athenian empire sunk to degradation. At the time when the little commonwealth achieved those victories which twenty-five eventful centuries have left unequalled, eloquence was in its infancy. The deliverers of Greece became its plunderers and oppressors. Unmeasured exaction, atrocious vengeance, the madness of the multitude, the tyranny of the great, filled the Cyclades with tears, and blood, and mourning. The sword unpeopled whole islands in a day. The plough passed over the ruins of famous cities. The imperial republic sent forth her children by thousands to pine in the quarries of Syracuse, or to feed the vultures of Ægospotami. She was at length reduced by famine and slaughter to humble herself before her enemies, and to purchase existence by the sacrifice of her empire and her laws. During these disastrous and gloomy years, oratory was advancing towards its highest excellence. And it was when the moral, the political, and the military character of the people was most utterly degraded, it was when the viceroy of a Macedonian sovereign gave law to Greece, that the courts of Athens witnessed the most splendid contest of eloquence that the world has ever known.

The causes of this phenomenon it is not, I think, difficult to assign. The division of labour operates on the productions of the orator as it does on those of the mechanic. It was remarked by the ancients that the Pentathlete, who divided his attention between several exercises, though he could not vie with a boxer in the use of the cestus, or with one who had confined his attention to running in the contest of the stadium, yet enjoyed far greater general vigour and health than either. It is the same with the mind. The superiority in technical skill is often more than compensated by the inferiority in general intelligence. And this is peculiarly the case in politics. States have always been best governed by men who have taken a wide view of public affairs, and who have rather a general acquaintance with many sciences than a perfect mastery of one. The union of the political and military departments in Greece contributed not a little to the splendour of its early history. After their separation more skilful generals and greater speakers appeared; but the breed of statesmen dwindled and became almost extinct. Themistocles or Pericles would have been no match for Demosthenes in the assembly, or for Iphicrates in the field. But surely they were incomparably better fitted than either for the supreme direction of affairs.

There is indeed a remarkable coincidence between the progress of the art of war, and that of the art of oratory, among the Greeks. They both advanced to perfection by contemporaneous steps, and from similar causes. The early speakers, like the early warriors of Greece, were merely a militia. It was found that in both employments practice and discipline gave superiority.* Each pursuit therefore became first an art, and then a trade. In proportion as the professors of each became more expert in their particular craft, they became less respectable in their general character. Their skill had been obtained at too great expense to be employed only from disinterested views. Thus, the soldiers forgot that they were citizens, and the orators that they were statesmen. I know not to what Demosthenes and his famous contemporaries can be so justly compared as to those mercenary troops who, in their time, overran Greece; or those who, from similar causes, were some centuries ago the scourge of the Italian republics,—perfectly acquainted with every part of their profession, irresistible in the field, powerful to defend or to destroy, but defending without love, and destroying without hatred. We may despise the characters of these political *Condottieri*; but it is impossible to examine the system of their tactics without being amazed at its perfection.

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* It has often occurred to me, that to the circumstances mentioned in the text is to be referred one of the most remarkable events in Grecian history; I mean the silent but rapid downfall of the Lacedæmonian power. Soon after the termination of the Peloponnesian war, the strength of Lacedæmon began to decline. Its military discipline, its social institutions, were the same. Agesilaus, during whose reign the change took place, was the ablest of its kings. Yet the Spartan armies were frequently defeated in pitched battles,—an occurrence considered impossible in the earlier ages of Greece. They are allowed to have fought most bravely; yet they were no longer attended by the success to which they had formerly been accustomed. No solution of these circumstances is offered, as far as I know, by any ancient author. The real cause, I conceive, was this. The Lacedæmonians, alone among the Greeks, formed a

I had intended to proceed to this examination, and to consider separately the remains of Lysias, of Æschines, of Demosthenes, and of Isocrates, who, though strictly speaking he was rather a pamphleteer than an orator, deserves, on many accounts, a place in such a disquisition. The length of my prolegomena and digressions compels me to postpone this part of the subject to another occasion. A Magazine is certainly a delightful invention for a very idle or a very busy man. He is not compelled to complete his plan or to adhere to his subject. He may ramble as far as he is inclined, and stop as soon as he is tired. No one takes the trouble to recollect his contradictory opinions or his unredeemed pledges. He may be as superficial, as inconsistent, and as careless as he chooses. Magazines resemble those little angels, who, according to the pretty Rabbinical tradition, are generated every morning by the brook which rolls over the flowers of Paradise,—whose life is a song,—who warble till sunset, and then sink back without regret into nothingness. Such spirits have nothing to do with the detecting spear of Ithuriel or the victorious sword of Michael. It is enough for them to please and be forgotten.

A PROPHETIC ACCOUNT OF A GRAND NATIONAL EPIC POEM, TO BE ENTITLED "THE WELLINGTONIAD," AND TO BE PUBLISHED A.D. 2824.

(November, 1824.)

How I became a prophet it is not very important to the reader to know. Nevertheless I feel all the anxiety which, under similar circumstances,

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permanent standing army. While the citizens of other commonwealths were engaged in agriculture and trade, they had no employment whatever but the study of military discipline. Hence, during the Persian and Peloponnesian wars, they had that advantage over their neighbours which regular troops always possess over militia. This advantage they lost, when other states began, at a later period, to employ mercenary forces, who were probably as superior to them in the art of war as they had hitherto been to their antagonists.

troubled the sensitive mind of Sidrophel; and, like him, am eager to vindicate myself from the suspicion of having practised forbidden arts, or held intercourse with beings of another world. I solemnly declare, therefore, that I never saw a ghost, like Lord Lyttleton; consulted a gipsy, like Josephine; or heard my name pronounced by an absent person, like Dr Johnson. Though it is now almost as usual for gentlemen to appear at the moment of their death to their friends as to call on them during their life, none of my acquaintance have been so polite as to pay me that customary attention. I have derived my knowledge neither from the dead nor from the living; neither from the lines of a hand, nor from the grounds of a tea-cup; neither from the stars of the firmament, nor from the fiends of the abyss. I have never, like the Wesley family, heard "that mighty leading angel," who "drew after him the third part of heaven's sons," scratching in my cupboard. I have never been enticed to sign any of those delusive bonds which have been the ruin of so many poor creatures; and, having always been an indifferent horseman, I have been careful not to venture myself on a broomstick.

My insight into futurity, like that of George Fox the quaker, and that of our great and philosophic poet, Lord Byron, is derived from simple presentiment. This is a far less artificial process than those which are employed by some others. Yet my predictions will, I believe, be found more correct than theirs, or, at all events, as Sir Benjamin Backbite says in the play, "more circumstantial."

I prophesy then, that, in the year 2824, according to our present reckoning, a grand national Epic Poem, worthy to be compared with the Iliad, the Æneid, or the Jerusalem, will be published in London.

Men naturally take an interest in the adventures of every eminent writer. I will, therefore, gratify the laudable curiosity, which, on this occasion, will doubtless be universal, by prefixing to my account of the poem a concise memoir of the poet.

Richard Quongti will be born at Westminster on the 1st of July, 2786. He will be the younger son of the younger branch of one of the most respectable families in England. He will be lineally descended from Quongti, the famous Chinese liberal, who, after the failure of the heroic attempt of his party to obtain a constitution from the Emperor Fim Fam, will take refuge in England, in the twenty-third century. Here his descendants will obtain considerable note; and one branch of the family will be raised to the peerage.

Richard, however, though destined to exalt his family to distinction far nobler than any which wealth or titles can bestow, will be born to a very scanty fortune. He will display in his early youth such striking talents as will attract the notice of Viscount Quongti, his third cousin, then secretary of state for the Steam Department. At the expense of this eminent nobleman, he will be sent to prosecute his studies at the university of Tombuctoo. To that illustrious seat of the muses all the ingenuous youth of every country will then be attracted by the high scientific character of Professor Quashaboo, and the eminent literary attainments of Professor Kissey Kickey. In spite of this formidable competition, however, Quongti will acquire the highest honours in every department of knowledge, and will obtain the esteem of his associates by his amiable and unaffected manners. The guardians of the young Duke of Carrington, premier peer of England, and the last remaining scion of the ancient and illustrious house of Smith, will be desirous to secure so able an instructor for their ward. With the Duke, Quongti will perform the grand tour, and visit the polished courts of Sydney and Capetown. After prevailing on his pupil, with great difficulty, to subdue a violent and imprudent passion which he had conceived for a Hottentot lady, of great beauty and accomplishments indeed, but of dubious character, he will travel with him to the United States of America. But that tremendous war which will be fatal to American liberty will, at that time, be raging through the whole federation. At New York the travellers will hear of the final defeat and death of the illustrious champion of freedom, Jonathan Higginbottom, and of the elevation of Ebenezer Hogsflesh to the perpetual Presidency. They will not choose to proceed in a journey which would expose them to the insults of that brutal soldiery, whose cruelty and rapacity will have devastated Mexico and Colombia, and now, at length, enslaved their own country.

On their return to England, A.D. 2810, the death of the Duke will compel his preceptor to seek for a subsistence by literary labours. His fame will be raised by many small productions of considerable merit ; and he will at last obtain a permanent place in the highest class of writers by his great epic poem.

The celebrated work will become, with unexampled rapidity, a popular favourite. The sale will be so beneficial to the author that, instead of going about the dirty streets on his velocipede, he will be enabled to set up his balloon.

The character of this noble poem will be so finely and justly given in the Tombuctoo Review for April 2825, that I cannot refrain from translating the passage. The author will be our poet's old preceptor, Professor Kissey Kickey.

"In pathos, in splendour of language, in sweetness of versification, Mr Quongti has long been considered as unrivalled. In his exquisite poem on the *Ornithorhynchus Paradoxus* all these qualities are displayed in their greatest perfection. How exquisitely does that work arrest and embody the undefined and vague shadows which flit over an imaginative mind. The cold worldling may not comprehend it ; but it will find a response in the bosom of every youthful poet, of every enthusiastic lover, who has seen an *Ornithorhynchus Paradoxus* by moonlight. But we were yet to learn that he possessed the comprehension, the judgment, and the fertility of mind indispensable to the epic poet.

"It is difficult to conceive a plot more perfect than that of the 'Wellingtoniad.' It is most faithful to the manners of the age to which it relates. It preserves exactly all the historical circumstances, and interweaves them most artfully with all the *speciosa miracula* of supernatural agency."

Thus far the learned Professor of Humanity in the university of Tombuctoo. I fear that the critics of our time will form an opinion diametrically opposite as to these very points. Some will, I fear, be disgusted by the machinery, which is derived from the mythology of ancient Greece. I can only say that, in the twenty-ninth century, that machinery will be universally in use among poets ; and that Quongti will use it, partly in conformity with the general practice, and partly from a veneration, perhaps excessive, for the great remains of classical antiquity, which will then, as now, be assiduously read by every man of education ; though Tom Moore's songs will be forgotten, and only three copies of Lord Byron's works will exist : one in the possession of King George the Nineteenth, one in the Duke of Carrington's collection, and one in the library of the British Museum. Finally, should any good people be concerned to hear that Pagan fictions will so long retain their influence over literature, let them reflect that, as the Bishop of St David's says, in his "Proofs of the Inspiration of the Sibylline Verses," read at the last meeting of the Royal Society of Literature, "at all events, a Pagan is not a Papist."

Some readers of the present day may think that Quongti is by no means entitled to the compliments which his Negro critic pays him on his adherence to the historical circumstances of the time in which he has chosen his subject; that, where he introduces any trait of our manners, it is in the wrong place, and that he confounds the customs of our age with those of much more remote periods. I can only say that the charge is infinitely more applicable to Homer, Virgil, and Tasso. If, therefore, the reader should detect, in the following abstract of the plot, any little deviation from strict historical accuracy, let him reflect, for a moment, whether Agamemnon would not have found as much to censure in the Iliad,—Dido in the Æneid,—or Godfrey in the Jerusalem. Let him not suffer his opinions to depend on circumstances which cannot possibly affect the truth or falsehood of the representation. If it be impossible for a single man to kill hundreds in battle, the impossibility is not diminished by distance of time. If it be as certain that Rinaldo never disenchanted a forest in Palestine as it is that the Duke of Wellington never disenchanted the forest of Soignies, can we, as rational men, tolerate the one story and ridicule the other? Of this, at least, I am certain, that whatever excuse we have for admiring the plots of those famous poems our children will have for extolling that of the "Wellingtoniad."

I shall proceed to give a sketch of the narrative. The subject is "The Reign of the Hundred Days."

BOOK I.

THE poem commences, in form, with a solemn proposition of the subject. Then the muse is invoked to give the poet accurate information as to the causes of so terrible a commotion. The answer to this question, being, it is to be supposed, the joint production of the poet and the muse, ascribes the event to circumstances which have hitherto eluded all the research of political writers, namely, the influence of the god Mars, who, we are told, had some forty years before usurped the conjugal rights of old Carlo Buonaparte, and given birth to Napoleon. By his incitement it was that the emperor with his devoted companions was now on the sea, returning to his ancient dominions. The gods were at present, fortunately for the adventurer, feasting with the Ethiopians, whose entertainments, according to the ancient custom described by Homer, they annually attended, with the same sort of condescending gluttony which now carries the cabinet to Guildhall on the 9th of November. Neptune was, in consequence, absent, and unable to prevent the enemy of his favourite island from crossing his element. Boreas, however, who had his abode on the banks of the Russian ocean, and who, like Thetis in the Iliad, was not of sufficient quality to have an invitation to Ethiopia, resolves to destroy the armament which brings war and danger to his beloved Alexander. He accordingly raises a storm which is most powerfully described. Napoleon bewails the inglorious fate for which he seems to be reserved. "Oh! thrice happy," says he, "those who were frozen to death at Krasnoi, or slaughtered at Leipsic. Oh, Kutusoff, bravest of the Russians, wherefore was I not permitted to fall by thy victorious sword?" He then offers a prayer to Æolus, and vows to him a sacrifice of a black ram. In consequence, the god recalls his turbulent subject; the sea is calmed; and the ship anchors in the port of Frejus. Napoleon and Bertrand, who is always called the faithful Bertrand, land to explore the country; Mars meets them disguised as a lancer of the guard, wearing the cross of the legion of honour. He advises them to apply for necessaries of all kinds to the governor, shows them the way, and disappears with a strong smell of gunpowder. Napoleon makes a pathetic speech, and enters the governor's house. Here he sees hanging up a fine print of the battle of Austerlitz, himself in the foreground giving his orders. This puts him in high spirits; he advances and salutes the governor, who receives him most loyally, gives him an entertainment, and, according to the usage of all epic hosts, insists after dinner on a full narration of all that has happened to him since the battle of Leipsic.

BOOK II.

NAPOLEON carries his narrative from the battle of Leipsic to his abdication. But, as we shall have a great quantity of fighting on our hands, I think it best to omit the details.

BOOK III.

NAPOLEON describes his sojourn at Elba, and his return; how he was driven by stress of weather to Sardinia, and fought with the harpies there; how he was then carried southward to Sicily, where he generously took on board an English sailor, whom a man-of-war had unhappily left there, and who was in imminent danger of being devoured by the Cyclops; how he landed in the bay of Naples, saw the Sibyl, and descended to Tartarus; how he held a long and pathetic conversation with Poniatowski, whom he found wandering unburied on the banks of Styx; how he swore to give him a splendid funeral; how he had also an affectionate interview with Desaix; how Moreau and Sir Ralph Abercrombie fled at the sight of him. He relates that he then re-embarked, and met with nothing of importance till the commencement of the storm with which the poem opens.

BOOK IV.

THE scene changes to Paris. Fame, in the garb of an express, brings intelligence of the landing of Napoleon. The king performs a sacrifice: but the entrails are unfavourable; and the victim is without a heart. He prepares to encounter the invader. A young captain of the guard,—the son of Maria Antoinette by Apollo,—in the shape of a fiddler, rushes in to tell him that Napoleon is approaching with a vast army. The royal forces are drawn out for battle. Full catalogues are given of the regiments on both sides; their colonels, lieutenant-colonels, and uniform.

BOOK V.

THE king comes forward and defies Napoleon to single combat. Napoleon accepts it. Sacrifices are offered. The ground is measured by Ney and Macdonald. The combatants advance. Louis snaps his pistol in vain. The bullet of Napoleon, on the contrary, carries off the tip of the king's ear. Napoleon then rushes on him sword in hand.

But Louis snatches up a stone, such as ten men of those degenerate days will be unable to move, and hurls it at his antagonist. Mars averts it. Napoleon then seizes Louis, and is about to strike a fatal blow, when Bacchus intervenes, like Venus in the third book of the Iliad, bears off the king in a thick cloud, and seats him in an hotel at Lille, with a bottle of Maraschino and a basin of soup before him. Both armies instantly proclaim Napoleon emperor.

BOOK VI.

NEPTUNE, returned from his Ethiopian revels, sees with rage the events which have taken place in Europe. He flies to the cave of Alecto, and drags out the fiend, commanding her to excite universal hostility against Napoleon. The Fury repairs to Lord Castlereagh ; and, as, when she visited Turnus, she assumed the form of an old woman, she here appears in the kindred shape of Mr Vansittart, and in an impassioned address exhorts his lordship to war. His lordship, like Turnus, treats this unwonted monitor with great disrespect, tells him that he is an old doting fool, and advises him to look after the ways and means, and leave questions of peace and war to his betters. The Fury then displays all her terrors. The neat powdered hair bristles up into snakes ; the black stockings appear clotted with blood ; and, brandishing a torch, she announces her name and mission. Lord Castlereagh, seized with fury, flies instantly to the Parliament, and recommends war with a torrent of eloquent invective. All the members instantly clamour for vengeance, seize their arms which are hanging round the walls of the house, and rush forth to prepare for instant hostilities.

BOOK VII.

IN this book intelligence arrives at London of the flight of the Duchess d'Angoulême from France. It is stated that this heroine, armed from head to foot, defended Bordeaux against the adherents of Napoleon, and that she fought hand to hand with Clausel, and beat him down with an enormous stone. Deserted by her followers, she at last, like Turnus, plunged, armed as she was, into the Garonne, and swam to an English ship which lay off the coast. This intelligence yet more inflames the English to war.

A yet bolder flight than any which has been mentioned follows. The Duke of Wellington goes to take leave of the duchess ; and a scene passes quite equal to the famous interview of Hector and Andromache. Lord Douro is frightened at his father's feather, but begs for his epaulette.

BOOK VIII.

NEPTUNE, trembling for the event of the war, implores Venus, who, as the offspring of his element, naturally venerates him, to procure from Vulcan a deadly sword and a pair of unerring pistols for the Duke. They are accordingly made, and superbly decorated. The sheath of the sword, like the shield of Achilles, is carved, in exquisitely fine miniature, with scenes from the common life of the period ; a dance at Almack's, a boxing match at the Fives-court, a lord mayor's procession, and a man hanging. All these are fully and elegantly described. The Duke thus armed hastens to Brussels.

BOOK IX.

THE Duke is received at Brussels by the King of the Netherlands with great magnificence. He is informed of the approach of the armies of all the confederate kings. The poet, however, with a laudable zeal for the glory of his country, completely passes over the exploits of the Austrians in Italy, and the discussions of the congress. England and France, Wellington and Napoleon, almost exclusively occupy his attention. Several days are spent at Brussels in revelry. The English heroes astonish their allies by exhibiting splendid games, similar to those which draw the flower of the British aristocracy to Newmarket and Moulsey Hurst, and which will be considered by our descendants with as much veneration as the Olympian and Isthmian contests by classical students of the present time. In the combat of the cestus, Shaw, the life-guardsman, vanquishes the Prince of Orange, and obtains a bull as a prize. In the horse-race, the Duke of Wellington and Lord Uxbridge ride against each other; the Duke is victorious, and is rewarded with twelve opera-girls. On the last day of the festivities, a splendid dance takes place, at which all the heroes attend.

BOOK X.

MARS, seeing the English army thus inactive, hastens to rouse Napoleon, who, conducted by Night and Silence, unexpectedly attacks the Prussians. The slaughter is immense. Napoleon kills many whose histories and families are happily particularised. He slays Herman, the craniologist, who dwelt by the linden-shadowed Elbe, and measured with his eye the skulls of all who walked through the streets of Berlin. Alas! his own skull is now cleft by the Corsican sword. Four pupils of the University of Jena advance together to encounter the Emperor; at four blows he destroys them all. Blucher rushes to arrest the devastation; Napoleon strikes him to the ground, and is on the point of killing him, but Gneisenau, Ziethen, Bulow, and all the other heroes of the Prussian army, gather round him, and bear the venerable chief to a distance from the field. The slaughter is continued till night. In the meantime Neptune has despatched Fame to bear the intelligence to the Duke, who is dancing at Brussels. The whole army is put in motion. The Duke of Brunswick's horse speaks to admonish him of his danger, but in vain.

BOOK XI.

PICTON, the Duke of Brunswick, and the Prince of Orange, engage Ney at Quatre Bras. Ney kills the Duke of Brunswick, and strips him, sending his belt to Napoleon. The English fall back on Waterloo. Jupiter calls a council of the gods, and commands that none shall interfere on either side. Mars and Neptune make very eloquent speeches. The battle of Waterloo commences. Napoleon kills Picton and Delancy. Ney engages Ponsonby and kills him. The Prince of Orange is wounded by Soult. Lord Uxbridge flies to check the carnage. He is severely wounded by Napoleon, and only saved by the assistance of Lord Hill. In the meantime the Duke makes a tremendous carnage among the French. He encounters General Duhesme and vanquishes him, but spares his life. He kills Toubert, who kept the gaming-house in the Palais Royal, and Maronet, who loved to spend whole nights in drinking champagne. Clerval, who had been hooted from the stage, and had then become a captain in the Imperial Guard, wished that he had still continued to face the more harmless enmity of the Parisian pit. But Larrey, the son of Esculapius, whom his father had instructed in all the secrets of his art, and who was surgeon-general of the French army, embraced the knees of the destroyer, and conjured him not to give death to one whose office it was to give life. The Duke raised him, and bade him live.

But we must hasten to the close. Napoleon rushes to encounter Wellington. Both armies stand in mute amaze. The heroes fire their pistols; that of Napoleon misses, but that of Wellington, formed by the hand of Vulcan, and primed by the Cyclops, wounds the Emperor in the thigh. He flies, and takes refuge among his troops. The flight becomes promiscuous. The arrival of the Prussians, from a motive of patriotism, the poet completely passes over.

BOOK XII.

THINGS are now hastening to the catastrophe. Napoleon flies to London, and, seating himself on the hearth of the Regent, embraces the household gods and conjures him, by the venerable age of George III., and by the opening perfections of the Princess Charlotte, to spare him. The Prince is inclined to do so; when, looking on his breast, he sees there the belt of the Duke of Brunswick. He instantly draws his sword, and is about to stab the destroyer of his kinsman. Piety and hospitality, however, restrain his hand. He takes a middle course, and condemns Napoleon to be exposed on a desert island. The King of France re-enters Paris; and the poem concludes.

ON MITFORD'S HISTORY OF GREECE.

(NOVEMBER 1824.)

THIS is a book which enjoys a great and increasing popularity: but, while it has attracted a considerable share of the public attention, it has been little noticed by the critics. Mr Mitford has almost succeeded in mounting, unperceived by those whose office it is to watch such aspirants, to a high place among historians. He has taken a seat on the dais without being challenged by a single seneschal. To oppose the progress of his fame is now almost a hopeless enterprise. Had he been reviewed with candid severity, when he had published only his first volume, his work would either have deserved its reputation, or would never have obtained it. "Then," as Indra says of Kehama, "then was the time to strike." The time was neglected; and the consequence is that Mr Mitford like Kehama, has laid his victorious hand on the literary Amreeta, and seems about to taste the precious elixir of immortality. I shall venture to emulate the courage of the honest Glendoveer—

> "When now
> He saw the Amreeta in Kehama's hand,
> An impulse that defied all self-command,
> In that extremity,
> Stung him, and he resolved to seize the cup,
> And dare the Rajah's force in Seeva's sight,
> Forward he sprung to tempt the unequal fray."

In plain words, I shall offer a few considerations, which may tend to reduce an overpraised writer to his proper level.

The principal characteristic of this historian, the origin of his excellencies and his defects, is a love of singularity. He has no notion of going with a multitude to do either good or evil. An exploded opinion, or an unpopular person, has an irresistible charm for him. The same perverseness may be traced in his diction. His style would never have been elegant; but it might at least have been manly and perspicuous; and nothing but the most elaborate care could possibly have made it so bad as it is. It is distinguished by harsh phrases, strange collocations, occasional solecisms, frequent obscurity, and, above all, by a peculiar oddity, which can no more be described than it can be overlooked. Nor is this all. Mr Mitford piques himself on spelling better than any of his neighbours; and this not only in ancient names, which he mangles in defiance both of custom and of reason, but in the most ordinary words of the English language. It is, in itself, a matter perfectly indifferent whether we call a foreigner by the name which he bears in his own language, or by that which corresponds to it in ours; whether we say Lorenzo de Medici, or Lawrence de Medici, Jean Chauvin, or John Calvin. In such cases established usage is considered as law by all writers except Mr Mitford. If he were always consistent with himself, he might be excused for sometimes disagreeing with his neighbours; but he proceeds on no principle but that of being unlike the rest of the world. Every child has heard of Linnæus; therefore Mr Mitford calls him Linné: Rousseau is known all over Europe as Jean Jacques; therefore Mr Mitford bestows on him the strange appellation of John James.

Had Mr Mitford undertaken a History of any other country than Greece, this propensity would have rendered his work useless and absurd. His occasional remarks on the affairs of ancient Rome and of modern Europe are full of errors: but he writes of times with respect to which almost every other writer has been in the wrong; and, therefore, by resolutely deviating from his predecessors, he is often in the right.

Almost all the modern historians of Greece have shown the grossest ignorance of the most obvious phenomena of human nature. In their representations the generals and statesmen of antiquity are absolutely divested of all individuality. They are personifications; they are passions, talents, opinions, virtues, vices, but not men. Inconsistency is a thing of which these writers have no notion. That a man may have been liberal in his youth and avaricious in his age, cruel to one enemy and merciful to another, is to them utterly inconceivable. If the facts be undeniable, they suppose some strange and deep design, in order to explain what, as every one who has observed his own mind knows, needs no explanation at all. This is a mode of writing very acceptable to the multitude who have always been accustomed to make gods and dæmons out of men very little better or worse than themselves; but it appears contemptible to all who have watched the changes of human character—to all who have observed the influence of time, of circumstances, and of associates, on mankind—to all who have seen a hero in the gout, a democrat in the church, a pedant in love, or a philosopher in liquor. This practice of painting in nothing but black and white is unpardonable even in the drama. It is the great fault of Alfieri; and how much it injures the effect of his compositions will be obvious to every one who will compare his Rosmunda with the Lady Macbeth of Shakspeare. The one is a wicked woman; the other is a fiend. Her only feeling is hatred; all her words are curses. We are at once shocked and fatigued by the spectacle of such raving cruelty, excited by no provocation, repeatedly changing its object, and constant in nothing but in its inextinguishable thirst for blood.

In history this error is far more disgraceful. Indeed, there is no fault which so completely ruins a narrative in the opinion of a judicious reader. We know that the line of demarcation between good and bad men is so faintly marked as often to elude the most careful investigation of those who have the best opportunities for judging. Public men, above all, are surrounded with so many temptations and difficulties that some doubt must almost always hang over their real dispositions and intentions. The lives of Pym, Cromwell, Monk, Clarendon, Marlborough, Burnet, Walpole, are well known to us. We are acquainted with their actions, their speeches, their writings; we have abundance of letters and well-authenticated anecdotes relating to them: yet what candid man will venture very positively to say which of them were honest and which of them were dishonest men? It appears easier to pronounce decidedly upon the great characters of antiquity, not because we have greater means of discovering truth, but simply because we have less means of detecting error. The modern historians of Greece have forgotten this. Their heroes and villains are as consistent in all their sayings and doings as the cardinal virtues and the deadly sins in an allegory. We should as soon expect a good action from giant Slay-good in Bunyan as from Dionysius; and a crime of Epaminondas would seem as incongruous as a *faux-pas* of the grave and comely damsel called Discretion, who answered the bell at the door of the house Beautiful.

This error was partly the cause and partly the effect of the high estimation in which the later ancient writers have been held by modern scholars. Those French and English authors who have treated of the affairs of Greece have generally turned with contempt from the simple and natural narrations of Thucydides and Xenophon to the extravagant representations of Plutarch, Diodorus, Curtius, and other romancers of the same class,—men who described military operations without ever having handled a sword, and applied to the seditions of little republics speculations formed by observation on an empire which covered half the known world. Of liberty they knew nothing. It was to them a great mystery—a superhuman enjoyment. They ranted about liberty and patriotism, from the same cause which leads monks to talk more ardently than other men about love and women. A wise man values political liberty, because it secures the persons and the possessions of citizens; because it tends to prevent the extravagance of rulers, and the corruption of judges; because it gives birth to useful sciences and elegant arts; because it excites the industry and increases the comforts of all classes of society. These theorists imagined that it possessed something eternally and intrinsically good, distinct from the blessings which it generally produced. They considered it not as a means but as an end; an end to be attained at any cost. Their favourite heroes are those who have sacrificed, for the mere name of freedom, the prosperity—the security—the justice—from which freedom derives its value.

There is another remarkable characteristic of these writers, in which their modern worshippers have carefully imitated them—a great fondness for good stories. The most established facts, dates, and characters are never suffered to come into competition with a splendid saying, or a romantic exploit. The early historians have left us natural and simple descriptions of the great events which they witnessed, and the great men with whom they associated. When we read the account which Plutarch and Rollin have given of the same period, we scarcely know our old acquaintance again; we are utterly confounded by the melo-dramatic effect of the narration, and the sublime coxcombry of the characters.

These are the principal errors into which the predecessors of Mr Mitford have fallen; and from most of these he is free. His faults are of a completely different description. It is to be hoped that the students of history may now be saved, like Dorax in Dryden's play, by swallowing two conflicting poisons, each of which may serve as an antidote to the other.

The first and most important difference between Mr Mitford and those who have preceded him is in his narration. Here the advantage lies, for the most part, on his side. His principle is to follow the contemporary historians, to look with doubt on all statements which are not in some degree confirmed by them, and absolutely to reject all which are contradicted by them. While he retains the guidance of some writer in whom he can place confidence, he goes on excellently. When he loses it, he falls to the level, or perhaps below the level, of the writers whom he so much despises: he is as absurd as they, and very much duller. It is really amusing to observe how he proceeds with his narration when he has no better authority than poor Diodorus. He is compelled to relate something; yet he believes nothing. He accompanies every fact with a long statement of objections. His account of the administration of Dionysius is in no sense a history. It ought to be entitled—"Historic doubts as to certain events, alleged to have taken place in Sicily."

This scepticism, however, like that of some great legal characters almost as sceptical as himself, vanishes whenever his political partialities interfere. He is a vehement admirer of tyranny and oligarchy, and considers no evidence as feeble which can be brought forward in favour of those forms of government. Democracy he hates with a perfect hatred, a hatred which, in the first volume of his history, appears only in his episodes and reflections, but which, in those parts where he has less reverence for his guides, and can venture to take his own way, completely distorts even his narration.

In taking up these opinions, I have no doubt that Mr Mitford was influenced by the same love of singularity which led him to spell *island* without an *s*, and to place two dots over the last letter of *idea*. In truth, preceding historians have erred so monstrously on the other side that even the worst parts of Mr Mitford's book may be useful as a corrective. For a young gentleman who talks much about his country, tyrannicide, and Epaminondas, this work, diluted in a sufficient quantity of Rollin and Barthelemi, may be a very useful remedy.

The errors of both parties arise from an ignorance or a neglect of the fundamental principles of political science. The writers on one side imagine popular government to be always a blessing; Mr Mitford omits no opportunity of assuring us that it is always a curse. The fact is, that a good government, like a good coat, is that which fits the body for which it is designed. A man who, upon abstract principles, pronounces a constitution to be good, without an exact knowledge of the people who are to be governed by it, judges as absurdly as a tailor who should measure the Belvidere Apollo for the clothes of all his customers. The demagogues who wished to see Portugal a republic, and the wise critics who revile the Virginians for not having instituted a peerage, appear equally ridiculous to all men of sense and candour.

That is the best government which desires to make the people happy, and knows how to make them happy. Neither the inclination nor the knowledge will suffice alone; and it is difficult to find them together.

Pure democracy, and pure democracy alone, satisfies the former condition of this great problem. That the governors may be solicitous only for the interests of the governed, it is necessary that the interests of the governors and the governed should be the same. This cannot be often the case where power is intrusted to one or to a few. The privileged part of the community will doubtless derive a certain degree of advantage from the general prosperity of the state; but they will derive a greater from oppression and exaction. The king will desire an useless war for his glory, or a *parc-aux-cerfs* for his pleasure. The nobles will demand monopolies and *lettres-de-câchet*. In proportion as the number of governors is increased the evil is diminished. There are fewer to contribute, and more to receive. The dividend which each can obtain of the public plunder becomes less and less tempting. But the interests of the subjects and the rulers never absolutely coincide till the subjects themselves become the rulers, that is, till the government be either immediately or mediately democratical.

But this is not enough. "Will without power," said the sagacious Casimir to Milor Beefington, "is like children playing at soldiers." The people will always be desirous to promote their own interests; but it may be doubted, whether, in any community, they were ever sufficiently educated to understand them. Even in this island, where the multitude have long been better informed than in any other part of Europe, the rights of the many have generally been asserted against themselves by the patriotism of the few. Free trade, one of the greatest blessings which a government can confer on a people, is in almost every country unpopular. It may be well doubted, whether a liberal policy with regard to our commercial relations would find any support from a parliament elected by universal suffrage. The republicans on the other side of the Atlantic have recently adopted regulations of which the consequences will, before long, show us,

> "How nations sink, by darling schemes oppressed,
> When vengeance listens to the fool's request."

The people are to be governed for their own good; and, that they may be governed for their own good, they must not be governed by their own ignorance. There are countries in which it would be as absurd to establish popular government as to abolish all the restraints in a school, or to untie all the strait-waistcoats in a madhouse.

Hence it may be concluded that the happiest state of society is that in which supreme power resides in the whole body of a well-informed people.

This is an imaginary, perhaps an unattainable, state of things. Yet, in some measure, we may approximate to it; and he alone deserves the name of a great statesman, whose principle it is to extend the power of the people in proportion to the extent of their knowledge, and to give them every facility for obtaining such a degree of knowledge as may render it safe to trust them with absolute power. In the mean time, it is dangerous to praise or condemn constitutions in the abstract; since, from the despotism of St Petersburg to the democracy of Washington, there is scarcely a form of government which might not, at least in some hypothetical case, be the best possible.

If, however, there be any form of government which in all ages and all nations has always been, and must always be, pernicious, it is certainly that which Mr Mitford, on his usual principle of being wiser than all the rest of the world, has taken under his especial patronage—pure oligarchy. This is closely, and indeed inseparably, connected with another of his eccentric tastes, a marked partiality for Lacedæmon, and a dislike of Athens. Mr Mitford's book has, I suspect, rendered these sentiments in some degree popular; and I shall, therefore, examine them at some length.

The shades in the Athenian character strike the eye more rapidly than those in the Lacedæmonian: not because they are darker, but because they are on a brighter ground. The law of ostracism is an instance of this. Nothing can be conceived more odious than the practice of punishing a citizen, simply and professedly, for his eminence;—and nothing in the institutions of Athens is more frequently or more justly censured. Lacedæmon was free from this. And why? Lacedæmon did not need it. Oligarchy is an ostracism of itself,—an ostracism not occasional, but permanent,—not dubious, but certain. Her laws prevented the development of merit instead of attacking its maturity. They did not cut down the plant in its high and palmy state, but cursed the soil with eternal sterility. In spite of the law of ostracism, Athens produced, within a hundred and fifty years, the greatest public men that ever existed. Whom had Sparta to ostracise? She produced, at most, four eminent men, Brasidas, Gylippus, Lysander, and Agesilaus. Of these, not one rose to distinction within her jurisdiction. It was only when they escaped from the region within which the influence of aristocracy withered everything good and noble, it was only when they ceased to be Lacedæmonians, that they became great men. Brasidas, among the cities of Thrace, was strictly a democratical leader, the favourite minister and general of the people. The same may be said of Gylippus, at Syracuse. Lysander, in the Hellespont, and Agesilaus, in Asia, were liberated for a time from the hateful restraints imposed by the constitution of Lycurgus. Both acquired fame abroad; and both returned to be watched and depressed at home. This is not peculiar to Sparta. Oligarchy, wherever it has existed, has always stunted the growth of genius. Thus it was at Rome, till about a century before the Christian era: we read of abundance of consuls and dictators who won battles, and enjoyed triumphs; but we look in vain for a single man of the first order of intellect,—for a Pericles, a Demosthenes, or a Hannibal. The Gracchi formed a strong democratical party; Marius revived it; the foundations of the old aristocracy were shaken; and two generations fertile in really great men appeared.

Venice is a still more remarkable instance: in her history we see nothing but the state; aristocracy had destroyed every seed of genius and virtue. Her dominion was like herself, lofty and magnificent, but founded on filth and weeds. God forbid that there should ever again exist a powerful and civilised state, which, after existing through thirteen hundred eventful years, should not bequeath to mankind the memory of one great name or one generous action.

Many writers, and Mr Mitford among the number, have admired the stability of the Spartan institutions ; in fact, there is little to admire, and less to approve. Oligarchy is the weakest and the most stable of governments ; and it is stable because it is weak. It has a sort of valetudinarian longevity ; it lives in the balance of Sanctorius ; it takes no exercise ; it exposes itself to no accident ; it is seized with an hypochondriac alarm at every new sensation ; it trembles at every breath ; it lets blood for every inflammation : and thus, without ever enjoying a day of health or pleasure, drags on its existence to a doting and debilitated old age.

The Spartans purchased for their government a prolongation of its existence by the sacrifice of happiness at home and dignity abroad. They cringed to the powerful ; they trampled on the weak ; they massacred their helots ; they betrayed their allies ; they contrived to be a day too late for the battle of Marathon ; they attempted to avoid the battle of Salamis ; they suffered the Athenians, to whom they owed their lives and liberties, to be a second time driven from their country by the Persians, that they might finish their own fortifications on the Isthmus ; they attempted to take advantage of the distress to which exertions in their cause had reduced their preservers, in order to make them their slaves ; they strove to prevent those who had abandoned their walls to defend them, from rebuilding them to defend themselves ; they commenced the Peloponnesian war in violation of their engagements with Athens ; they abandoned it in violation of their engagements with their allies ; they gave up to the sword whole cities which had placed themselves under their protection ; they bartered, for advantages confined to themselves, the interest, the freedom, and the lives of those who had served them most faithfully ; they took with equal complacency, and equal infamy, the stripes of Elis and the bribes of Persia ; they never showed either resentment or gratitude ; they abstained from no injury, and they revenged none. Above all, they looked on a citizen who served them well as their deadliest enemy. These are the arts which protract the existence of government.

Nor were the domestic institutions of Lacedæmon less hateful or less contemptible than her foreign policy. A perpetual interference with every part of the system of human life, a constant struggle against nature and reason, characterised all her laws. To violate even prejudices which have taken deep root in the minds of a people is scarcely expedient ; to think of extirpating natural appetites and passions is frantic : the external symptoms may be occasionally repressed ; but the feeling still exists, and, debarred from its natural objects, preys on the disordered mind and body of its victim. Thus it is in convents—thus it is among ascetic sects—thus it was among the Lacedæmonians. Hence arose that madness, or violence approaching to madness, which, in spite of every external restraint, often appeared among the most distinguished citizens of Sparta. Cleomenes terminated his career of raving cruelty by cutting himself to pieces. Pausanias seems to have been absolutely insane ; he formed a hopeless and profligate scheme ; he betrayed it by the ostentation of his behaviour, and the imprudence of his measures ; and he alienated, by his insolence, all who might have served or protected him. Xenophon, a warm admirer of Lacedæmon, furnishes us with the strongest evidence to this effect. It is impossible not to observe the brutal and senseless fury which characterises almost every Spartan with whom he was connected. Clearchus nearly lost his life by his cruelty. Chirisophus deprived his army of the services of a faithful guide by his unreasonable and ferocious severity. But it is needless to multiply instances. Lycurgus, Mr Mitford's favourite legislator, founded his whole system on a mistaken principle. He never considered that governments were made for men, and not men for governments. Instead of adapting the constitution to the people, he distorted the minds of the people to suit the constitution, a scheme worthy of the Laputan Academy of Projectors. And this appears to Mr Mitford to constitute his peculiar title to admiration. Hear himself: "What to modern eyes most strikingly sets that extraordinary man above all other legislators is, that in so many circumstances, apparently out of the reach of law, he controlled and formed to his own mind the wills and habits of his people." I should suppose that this gentleman had the advantage of receiving his education under the ferula of Dr Pangloss; for his metaphysics are clearly those of the castle of Thunder-ten-tronckh: "Remarquez bien que les nez ont été faits pour porter des lunettes, aussi avons nous des lunettes. Les jambes sont visiblement instituées pour être chaussées, et nous avons des chausses. Les cochons étant faits pour étre mangés, nous mangeons du porc toute l'année."

At Athens the laws did not constantly interfere with the tastes of the people. The children were not taken from their parents by that universal step-mother, the state. They were not starved into thieves, or tortured into bullies; there was no established table at which every one must dine, no established style in which every one must converse. An Athenian might eat whatever he could afford to buy, and talk as long as he could find people to listen. The government did not tell the people what opinions they were to hold, or what songs they were to sing. Freedom produced excellence. Thus philosophy took its origin. Thus were produced those models of poetry, of oratory, and of the arts, which scarcely fall short of the standard of ideal excellence. Nothing is more conducive to happiness than the free exercise of the mind in pursuits congenial to it. This happiness, assuredly, was enjoyed far more at Athens than at Sparta. The Athenians are acknowledged even by their enemies to have been distinguished, in private life, by their courteous and amiable demeanour. Their levity, at least, was better than Spartan sullenness, and their impertinence than Spartan insolence. Even in courage it may be questioned whether they were inferior to the Lacedæmonians. The great Athenian historian has reported a remarkable observation of the great Athenian minister. Pericles maintained that his countrymen, without submitting to the hardships of a Spartan education, rivalled all the achievements of Spartan valour, and that therefore the pleasures and amusements which they enjoyed were to be considered as so much clear gain. The infantry of Athens was certainly not equal to that of Lacedæmon; but this seems to have been caused merely by want of practice: the attention of the Athenians was diverted from the discipline of the phalanx to that of the trireme. The Lacedæmonians, in spite of all their boasted valour, were, from the same cause, timid and disorderly in naval action.

But we are told that crimes of great enormity were perpetrated by the Athenian government, and the democracies under its protection. It is true that Athens too often acted up to the full extent of the laws of war in an age when those laws had not been mitigated by causes which have operated in later times. This accusation is, in fact, common to Athens, to Lacedæmon, to all the states of Greece, and to all states similarly situated. Where communities are very large, the heavier evils of war are felt but by few. The ploughboy sings, the spinning-wheel turns round, the wedding-day is fixed, whether the last battle were lost or won. In little states it cannot be thus; every man feels in his own property and person the effect of a war. Every man is a soldier, and a soldier fighting for his nearest interests. His own trees have been cut down—his own corn has been burnt—his own house has been pillaged—his own relations have been killed. How can he entertain towards the enemies of his country the same feelings with one who has suffered nothing from them, except perhaps the addition of a small sum to the taxes which he pays? Men in such circumstances cannot be generous. They have too much at stake. It is when they are, if I may so express myself, playing for love, it is when war is a mere game at chess, it is when they are contending for a remote colony, a frontier town, the honours of a flag, a salute, or a title, that they can make fine speeches, and do good offices to their enemies. The Black Prince waited behind the chair of his captive; Villars interchanged repartees with Eugene; George II. sent congratulations to Louis XV., during a war, upon occasion of his escape from the attempt of Damien: and these things are fine and generous, and very gratifying to the author of the Broad Stone of Honour, and all the other wise men who think, like him, that God made the world only for the use of gentlemen. But they spring in general from utter heartlessness. No war ought ever to be undertaken but under circumstances which render all interchange of courtesy between the combatants impossible. It is a bad thing that men should hate each other; but it is far worse that they should contract the habit of cutting one another's throats without hatred. War is never lenient, but where it is wanton; when men are compelled to fight in selfdefence, they must hate and avenge: this may be bad; but it is human nature; it is the clay as it came from the hand of the potter.

It is true that among the dependencies of Athens seditions assumed a character more ferocious than even in France, during the reign of terror—the accursed Saturnalia of an accursed bondage. It is true that in Athens itself, where such convulsions were scarcely known, the condition of the higher orders was disagreeable; that they were compelled to contribute large sums for the service or the amusement of the public; and that they were sometimes harassed by vexatious informers. Whenever such cases occur, Mr Mitford's scepticism vanishes. The "if," the "but," the "it is said," the "if we may believe," with which he qualifies every charge against a tyrant or an aristocracy, are at once abandoned. The blacker the story, the firmer is his belief, and he never fails to inveigh with hearty bitterness against democracy as the source of every species of crime.

The Athenians, I believe, possessed more liberty than was good for them. Yet I will venture to assert that, while the splendour, the intelligence, and the energy of that great people were peculiar to themselves, the crimes with which they are charged arose from causes which were common to them with every other state which then existed. The violence of faction in that age sprung from a cause which has always been fertile in every political and moral evil, domestic slavery.

The effect of slavery is completely to dissolve the connection which naturally exists between the higher and lower classes of free citizens. The rich spend their wealth in purchasing and maintaining slaves. There is no demand for the labour of the poor; the fable of Menenius ceases to be applicable; the belly communicates no nutriment to the members; there is an atrophy in the body politic. The two parties, therefore, proceed to extremities utterly unknown in countries where they have mutually need of each other. In Rome the oligarchy was too powerful to be subverted by force; and neither the tribunes nor the popular assemblies, though constitutionally omnipotent, could maintain a successful contest against men who possessed the whole property of the state. Hence the necessity for measures tending to unsettle the whole frame of society, and to take away every motive of industry; the abolition of debts, and the agrarian laws—propositions absurdly condemned by men who do not consider the circumstances from which they sprung. They were the desperate remedies of a desperate disease. In Greece the oligarchical interest was not in general so deeply rooted as at Rome. The multitude, therefore, often redressed by force grievances which, at Rome, were commonly attacked under the forms of the constitution. They drove out or massacred the rich, and divided their property. If the superior union or military skill of the rich rendered them victorious, they took measures equally violent, disarmed all in whom they could not confide, often slaughtered great numbers, and occasionally expelled the whole commonalty from the city, and remained, with their slaves, the sole inhabitants.

From such calamities Athens and Lacedæmon alone were almost completely free. At Athens the purses of the rich were laid under regular contribution for the support of the poor; and this, rightly considered, was as much a favour to the givers as to the receivers, since no other measure could possibly have saved their houses from pillage and their persons from violence. It is singular that Mr Mitford should perpetually reprobate a policy which was the best that could be pursued in such a state of things, and which alone saved Athens from the frightful outrages which were perpetrated at Corcyra.

Lacedæmon, cursed with a system of slavery more odious than has ever existed in any other country, avoided this evil by almost totally annihilating private property. Lycurgus began by an agrarian law. He abolished all professions except that of arms; he made the whole of his community a standing army, every member of which had a common right to the services of a crowd of miserable bondmen; he secured the state from sedition at the expense of the Helots. Of all the parts of his system this is the most creditable to his head, and the most disgraceful to his heart.

These considerations, and many others of equal importance, Mr Mitford has neglected; but he has yet a heavier charge to answer. He has made not only illogical inferences, but false statements. While he never states, without qualifications and objections, the charges which the earliest and best historians have brought against his favourite tyrants, Pisistratus, Hippias, and Gelon, he transcribes, without any hesitation, the grossest abuse of the least authoritative writers against every democracy and every demagogue. Such an accusation should not be made without being supported; and I will therefore select one out of many passages which will fully substantiate the charge, and convict Mr Mitford of wilful misrepresentation, or of negligence scarcely less culpable. Mr Mitford is speaking of one of the greatest men that ever lived, Demosthenes, and comparing him with his rival, Æschines. Let him speak for himself.

"In earliest youth Demosthenes earned an opprobrious nickname by the effeminacy of his dress and manner." Does Mr Mitford know that Demosthenes denied this charge, and explained the nickname in a perfectly different manner?[*] And, if he knew it, should he not have stated it? He proceeds thus: "On emerging from minority, by the Athenian law, at five-and-twenty, he earned another opprobrious nickname by a prosecution of his guardians, which was considered as a dishonourable attempt to extort money from them." In the first place Demosthenes was not five-and-twenty years of age. Mr Mitford might have learned, from so common a book as the Archæologia of Archbishop Potter, that at twenty Athenian citizens were freed from the control of their guardians, and began to manage their own property. The very speech of Demosthenes against his guardians proves most satisfactorily that he was under twenty. In his speech against Midias, he says that when he undertook that prosecution he was quite[†] a boy. His youth might, therefore, excuse the step, even if it had been considered, as Mr Mitford says, a dishonourable attempt to extort money. But who considered it as such? Not the judges who condemned the guardians. The Athenian courts of justice were not the purest in the world; but their decisions were at least as likely to be just as the abuse of a deadly enemy. Mr Mitford refers for confirmation of his statement to Æschines and Plutarch. Æschines by no means bears him out; and Plutarch directly contradicts him. "Not long after," says Mr Mitford, "he took blows publicly in the theater" (I preserve the orthography, if it can be so called, of this historian) "from a petulant youth of rank, named Meidias." Here are two disgraceful mistakes. In the first place, it was long after; eight years at the very least, probably much more. In the next place the petulant youth, of whom Mr Mitford speaks, was fifty years old.[‡] Really Mr Mitford has less reason to censure the carelessness of his predecessors than to reform his own. After this monstrous inaccuracy, with regard to facts, we may be able to judge what degree of credit ought to be given to the vague abuse of such a writer. "The cowardice of Demosthenes in the field afterwards became notorious." Demosthenes was a civil character; war was not his business. In his time the division between military and political offices was beginning to be strongly marked; yet the recollection of the days when every citizen was a soldier was still recent. In such states of society a certain degree of disrepute always attaches to sedentary men; but that any leader of the Athenian democracy could have been, as Mr Mitford says of Demosthenes, a few lines before, remarkable for "an extraordinary deficiency of personal courage," is absolutely impossible. What mercenary warrior of the time exposed his life to greater or more constant perils? Was there a single soldier at Chæronea who had more cause to tremble for his safety than the orator, who, in case of defeat, could scarcely hope for mercy from the people whom he had misled or the prince whom he had opposed?

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[*] See the speech of Æschines against Timarchus.

[†] Μειρακύλλιον ὢν κομιδῆ.

[‡] Whoever will read the speech of Demosthenes against Midias will find the statements in the text confirmed, and will have, moreover, the pleasure of becoming acquainted with one of the finest compositions in the world.

Were not the ordinary fluctuations of popular feeling enough to deter any coward from engaging in political conflicts? Isocrates, whom Mr Mitford extols, because he constantly employed all the flowers of his school-boy rhetoric to decorate oligarchy and tyranny, avoided the judicial and political meetings of Athens from mere timidity, and seems to have hated democracy only because he durst not look a popular assembly in the face. Demosthenes was a man of a feeble constitution: his nerves were weak; but his spirit was high; and the energy and enthusiasm of his feelings supported him through life and in death.

So much for Demosthenes. Now for the orator of aristocracy. I do not wish to abuse Æschines. He may have been an honest man. He was certainly a great man; and I feel a reverence, of which Mr Mitford seems to have no notion, for great men of every party. But, when Mr Mitford says that the private character of Æschines was without stain, does he remember what Æschines has himself confessed in his speech against Timarchus? I can make allowances, as well as Mr Mitford, for persons who lived under a different system of laws and morals; but let them be made impartially. If Demosthenes is to be attacked on account of some childish improprieties, proved only by the assertion of an antagonist, what shall we say of those maturer vices which that antagonist has himself acknowledged? "Against the private character of Æschines," says Mr Mitford, "Demosthenes seems not to have had an insinuation to oppose." Has Mr Mitford ever read the speech of Demosthenes on the Embassy? Or can he have forgotten, what was never forgotten by anyone else who ever read it, the story which Demosthenes relates with such terrible energy of language concerning the drunken brutality of his rival? True or false, here is something more than an insinuation; and nothing can vindicate the historian, who has overlooked it, from the charge of negligence or of partiality. But Æschines denied the story. And did not Demosthenes also deny the story respecting his childish nickname, which Mr Mitford has nevertheless told without any qualification? But the judges, or some part of them, showed, by their clamour, their disbelief of the relation of Demosthenes. And did not the judges, who tried the cause between Demosthenes and his guardians, indicate, in a much clearer manner, their approbation of the prosecution? But Demosthenes was a demagogue, and is to be slandered. Æschines was an aristocrat, and is to be panegyrised. Is this a history, or a party-pamphlet?

These passages, all selected from a single page of Mr Mitford's work, may give some notion to those readers, who have not the means of comparing his statements with the original authorities, of his extreme partiality and carelessness. Indeed, whenever this historian mentions Demosthenes, he violates all the laws of candour and even of decency; he weighs no authorities; he makes no allowances; he forgets the best authenticated facts in the history of the times, and the most generally recognised principles of human nature. The opposition of the great orator to the policy of Philip he represents as neither more nor less than deliberate villany. I hold almost the same opinion with Mr Mitford respecting the character and the views of that great and accomplished prince. But am I, therefore, to pronounce Demosthenes profligate and insincere? Surely not. Do we not perpetually see men of the greatest talents and the purest intentions misled by national or factious prejudices? The most respectable people in England were, little more than forty years ago, in the habit of uttering the bitterest abuse against Washington and Franklin. It is certainly to be regretted that men should err so grossly in their estimate of character. But no person who knows anything of human nature will impute such errors to depravity.

Mr Mitford is not more consistent with himself than with reason. Though he is the advocate of all oligarchies, he is also a warm admirer of all kings, and of all citizens who raised themselves to that species of sovereignty which the Greeks denominated tyranny. If monarchy, as Mr Mitford holds, be in itself a blessing, democracy must be a better form of government than aristocracy, which is always opposed to the supremacy, and even to the eminence, of individuals. On the other hand, it is but one step that separates the demagogue and the sovereign.

If this article had not extended itself to so great a length, I should offer a few observations on some other peculiarities of this writer,—his general preference of the Barbarians to the Greeks,—his predilection for Persians, Carthaginians, Thracians, for all nations, in short, except that great and enlightened nation of which he is the historian. But I will confine myself to a single topic.

Mr Mitford has remarked, with truth and spirit, that "any history perfectly written, but especially a Grecian history perfectly written, should be a political institute for all nations." It has not occurred to him that a Grecian history, perfectly written, should also be a complete record of the rise and progress of poetry, philosophy, and the arts. Here his work is extremely deficient. Indeed, though it may seem a strange thing to say of a gentleman who has published so many quartos, Mr Mitford seems to entertain a feeling, bordering on contempt, for literary and speculative pursuits. The talents of action almost exclusively attract his notice; and he talks with very complacent disdain of "the idle learned." Homer, indeed, he admires; but principally, I am afraid, because he is convinced that Homer could neither read nor write. He could not avoid speaking of Socrates; but he has been far more solicitous to trace his death to political causes, and to deduce from it consequences unfavourable to Athens, and to popular governments, than to throw light on the character and doctrines of the wonderful man,

> "From whose mouth issued forth
> Mellifluous streams that watered all the schools
> Of Academics, old and new, with those
> Surnamed Peripatetics, and the sect
> Epicurean, and the Stoic severe."

He does not seem to be aware that Demosthenes was a great orator; he represents him sometimes as an aspirant demagogue, sometimes as an adroit negotiator, and always as a great rogue. But that in which the Athenian excelled all men of all ages, that irresistible eloquence, which at the distance of more than two thousand years stirs our blood, and brings tears into our eyes, he passes by with a few phrases of commonplace commendation. The origin of the drama, the doctrines of the sophists, the course of Athenian education, the state of the arts and sciences, the whole domestic system of the Greeks, he has almost completely neglected. Yet these things will appear, to a reflecting man, scarcely less worthy of attention than the taking of Sphacteria or the discipline of the targeteers of Iphicrates.

This, indeed, is a deficiency by no means peculiar to Mr Mitford. Most people seem to imagine that a detail of public occurrences—the operations of sieges—the changes of administrations—the treaties—the conspiracies—the rebellions—is a complete history. Differences of definition are logically unimportant; but practically they sometimes produce the most momentous effects. Thus it has been in the present case. Historians have, almost without exception, confined themselves to the public transactions of states, and have left to the negligent administration of writers of fiction a province at least equally extensive and valuable.

All wise statesmen have agreed to consider the prosperity or adversity of nations as made up of the happiness or misery of individuals, and to reject as chimerical all notions of a public interest of the community, distinct from the interest of the component parts. It is therefore strange that those whose office it is to supply statesmen with examples and warnings should omit, as too mean for the dignity of history, circumstances which exert the most extensive influence on the state of society. In general, the under current of human life flows steadily on, unruffled by the storms which agitate the surface. The happiness of the many commonly depends on causes independent of victories or defeats, of revolutions or restorations,—causes which can be regulated by no laws, and which are recorded in no archives. These causes are the things which it is of main importance to us to know, not how the Lacedæmonian phalanx was broken at Leuctra,—not whether Alexander died of poison or by disease. History, without these, is a shell without a kernel; and such is almost all the history which is extant in the world. Paltry skirmishes and plots are reported with absurd and useless minuteness; but improvements the most essential to the comfort of human life extend themselves over the world, and introduce themselves into every cottage, before any annalist can condescend, from the dignity of writing about generals and ambassadors, to take the least notice of them. Thus the progress of the most salutary inventions and discoveries is buried in impenetrable mystery; mankind are deprived of a most useful species of knowledge, and their benefactors of their honest fame. In the meantime every child knows by heart the dates and adventures of a long line of barbarian kings. The history of nations, in the sense in which I use the word, is often best studied in works not professedly historical. Thucydides, as far as he goes, is an excellent writer; yet he affords us far less knowledge of the most important particulars relating to Athens than Plato or Aristophanes. The little treatise of Xenophon on Domestic Economy contains more historical information than all the seven books of his Hellenics. The same may be said of the Satires of Horace, of the Letters of Cicero, of the novels of Le Sage, of the memoirs of Marmontel. Many others might be mentioned; but these sufficiently illustrate my meaning.

I would hope that there may yet appear a writer who may despise the present narrow limits, and assert the rights of history over every part of her natural domain. Should such a writer engage in that enterprise, in which I cannot but consider Mr Mitford as having failed, he will record, indeed, all that is interesting and important in military and political transactions; but he will not think anything too trivial for the gravity of history which is not too trivial to promote or diminish the happiness of man. He will portray in vivid colours the domestic society, the manners, the amusements, the conversation of the Greeks. He will not disdain to discuss the state of agriculture, of the mechanical arts, and of the conveniences of life. The progress of painting, of sculpture, and of architecture, will form an important part of his plan. But, above all, his attention will be given to the history of that splendid literature from which has sprung all the strength, the wisdom, the freedom, and the glory, of the western world.

Of the indifference which Mr Mitford shows on this subject I will not speak; for I cannot speak with fairness. It is a subject on which I love to forget the accuracy of a judge, in the veneration of a worshipper and the gratitude of a child. If we consider merely the subtlety of disquisition, the force of imagination, the perfect energy and elegance of expression which characterise the great works of Athenian genius, we must pronounce them intrinsically most valuable; but what shall we say when we reflect that from hence have sprung directly or indirectly, all the noblest creations of the human intellect; that from hence were the vast accomplishments and the brilliant fancy of Cicero; the withering fire of Juvenal; the plastic imagination of Dante; the humour of Cervantes; the comprehension of Bacon; the wit of Butler; the supreme and universal excellence of Shakspeare? All the triumphs of truth and genius over prejudice and power, in every country and in every age, have been the triumphs of Athens. Wherever a few great minds have made a stand against violence and fraud, in the cause of liberty and reason, there has been her spirit in the midst of them; inspiring, encouraging, consoling;—by the lonely lamp of Erasmus; by the restless bed of Pascal; in the tribune of Mirabeau; in the cell of Galileo; on the scaffold of Sidney. But who shall estimate her influence on private happiness? Who shall say how many thousands have been made wiser, happier, and better, by those pursuits in which she has taught mankind to engage: to how many the studies which took their rise from her have been wealth in poverty,—liberty in bondage,—health in sickness,—society in solitude? Her power is indeed manifested at the bar, in the senate, in the field of battle, in the schools of philosophy. But these are not her glory. Wherever literature consoles sorrow, or assuages pain,—wherever it brings gladness to eyes which fail with wakefulness and tears, and ache for the dark house and the long sleep,—there is exhibited, in its noblest form, the immortal influence of Athens.

The dervise, in the Arabian tale, did not hesitate to abandon to his comrade the camels with their load of jewels and gold, while he retained the casket of that mysterious juice which enabled him to behold at one glance all the hidden riches of the universe. Surely it is no exaggeration to say that no external advantage is to be compared with that purification of the intellectual eye which gives us to contemplate the infinite wealth of the mental world, all the hoarded treasures of its primeval dynasties, all the shapeless ore of its yet unexplored mines. This is the gift of Athens to man. Her freedom and her power have for more than twenty centuries been annihilated; her people have degenerated into timid slaves; her language into a barbarous jargon; her temples have been given up to the successive depredations of Romans, Turks, and Scotchmen; but her intellectual empire is imperishable. And when those who have rivalled her greatness shall have shared her fate; when civilisation and knowledge shall have fixed their abode in distant continents; when the sceptre shall have passed away from England; when, perhaps, travellers from distant regions shall in vain labour to decipher on some mouldering pedestal the name of our proudest chief; shall hear savage hymns chaunted to some misshapen idol over the ruined dome of our proudest temple; and shall see a single naked fisherman wash his nets in the river of the ten thousand masts;—her influence and her glory will still survive,—fresh in eternal youth, exempt from mutability and decay, immortal as the intellectual principle from which they derived their origin, and over which they exercise their control.

CONTRIBUTIONS

TO

THE EDINBURGH REVIEW.

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JOHN DRYDEN.

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THE public voice has assigned to Dryden the first place in the second rank of our poets,—no mean station in a table of intellectual precedency so rich in illustrious names. It is allowed that, even of the few who were his superiors in genius, none has exercised a more extensive or permanent influence on the national habits of thought and expression. His life was commensurate with the period during which a great revolution in the public taste was effected ; and in that revolution he played the part of Cromwell. By unscrupulously taking the lead in its wildest excesses, he obtained the absolute guidance of it. By trampling on laws, he acquired the authority of a legislator. By signalising himself as the most daring and irreverent of rebels, he raised himself to the dignity of a recognised prince. He commenced his career by the most frantic outrages. He terminated it in the repose of established sovereignty,—the author of a new code, the root of a new dynasty.

Of Dryden, however, as of almost every man who has been distinguished either in the literary or in the political world, it may be said that the course which he pursued, and the effect which he produced, depended less on his personal qualities than on the circumstances in which he was placed. Those who have read history with discrimination know the fallacy of those panegyrics and invectives which represent individuals as effecting great moral and intellectual revolutions, subverting established systems, and imprinting a new character on their age. The difference between one man and another is by no means so great as the superstitious crowd supposes. But the same feelings which in ancient Rome produced the apotheosis of a popular emperor, and in modern Rome the canonisation of a devout prelate, lead men to cherish an illusion which furnishes them with something to adore. By a law of association, from the operation of which even minds the most strictly regulated by reason are not wholly exempt, misery disposes us to hatred, and happiness to love, although there may be no person to whom our misery or our happiness can be ascribed. The peevishness of an invalid vents itself even on those who alleviate his pain. The good humour of a man elated by success often displays itself towards enemies. In the same manner, the feelings of pleasure and admiration, to which the contemplation of great events gives birth, make an object where they do not find it. Thus, nations descend to the absurdities of Egyptian idolatry, and worship stocks and reptiles—Sacheverells and Wilkeses. They even fall prostrate before a deity to which they have themselves given the form which commands their veneration, and which, unless fashioned by them, would have remained a shapeless block. They persuade themselves that they are the creatures of what they have themselves created. For, in fact, it is the age that forms the man, not the man that forms the age. Great minds do indeed re-act on the society which has made them what they are; but they only pay with interest what they have received. We extol Bacon, and sneer at Aquinas. But, if their situations had been changed, Bacon might have been the Angelical Doctor, the most subtle Aristotelian of the schools; the Dominican might have led forth the sciences from their house of bondage. If Luther had been born in the tenth century, he would have effected no reformation. If he had never been born at all, it is evident that the sixteenth century could not have elapsed without a great schism in the church. Voltaire, in the days of Louis the Fourteenth, would probably have been, like most of the literary men of that time, a zealous Jansenist, eminent among the defenders of efficacious grace, a bitter assailant of the lax morality of the Jesuits and the unreasonable decisions of the Sorbonne. If Pascal had entered on his literary career when intelligence was more general, and abuses at the same time more flagrant, when the church was polluted by the Iscariot Dubois, the court disgraced by the orgies of Canillac, and the nation sacrificed to the juggles of Law, if he had lived to see a dynasty of harlots, an empty treasury and a crowded harem, an army formidable only to those whom it should have protected, a priesthood just religious enough to be intolerant, he might possibly, like every man of genius in France, have imbibed extravagant prejudices against monarchy and Christianity. The wit which blasted the sophisms of Escobar—the impassioned eloquence which defended the sisters of Port Royal—the intellectual hardihood which was not beaten down even by Papal authority—might have raised him to the Patriarchate of the Philosophical Church. It was long disputed whether the honour of inventing the method of Fluxions belonged to Newton or to Leibnitz. It is now generally allowed that these great men made the same discovery at the same time. Mathematical science, indeed, had then reached such a point that, if neither of them had ever existed, the principle must inevitably have occurred to some person within a few years. So in our own time the doctrine of rent, now universally received by political economists, was propounded, almost at the same moment, by two writers unconnected with each other. Preceding speculators had long been blundering round about it; and it could not possibly have been missed much longer by the most heedless inquirer. We are inclined to think that, with respect to every great addition which has been made to the stock of human knowledge, the case has been similar; that without Copernicus we should have been Copernicans,—that without Columbus America would have been discovered,—that without Locke we should have possessed a just theory of the origin of human ideas. Society indeed has its great men and its little men, as the earth has its mountains and its valleys. But the inequalities of intellect, like the inequalities of the surface of our globe, bear so small a proportion to the mass, that, in calculating its great revolutions, they may safely be neglected. The sun illuminates the hills, while it is still below the horizon, and truth is discovered by the highest minds a little before it becomes manifest to the multitude. This is the extent of their superiority. They are the first to catch and reflect a light, which, without their assistance, must, in a short time, be visible to those who lie far beneath them.

The same remark will apply equally to the fine arts. The laws on which depend the progress and decline of poetry, painting, and sculpture, operate with little less certainty than those which regulate the periodical returns of heat and cold, of fertility and barrenness. Those who seem to lead the public taste are, in general, merely outrunning it in the direction which it is spontaneously pursuing. Without a just apprehension of the laws to which we have alluded the merits and defects of Dryden can be but imperfectly understood. We will, therefore, state what we conceive them to be.

The ages in which the master-pieces of imagination have been produced have by no means been those in which taste has been most correct. It seems that the creative faculty, and the critical faculty, cannot exist together in their highest perfection. The causes of this phenomenon it is not difficult to assign.

It is true that the man who is best able to take a machine to pieces, and who most clearly comprehends the manner in which all its wheels and springs conduce to its general effect, will be the man most competent to form another machine of similar power. In all the branches of physical and moral science which admit of perfect analysis, he who can resolve will be able to combine. But the analysis which criticism can effect of poetry is necessarily imperfect. One element must for ever elude its researches; and that is the very element by which poetry is poetry. In the description of nature, for example, a judicious reader will easily detect an incongruous image. But he will find it impossible to explain in what consists the art of a writer who, in a few words, brings some spot before him so vividly that he shall know it as if he had lived there from childhood; while another, employing the same materials, the same verdure, the same water, and the same flowers, committing no inaccuracy, introducing nothing which can be positively pronounced superfluous, omitting nothing which can be positively pronounced necessary, shall produce no more effect than an advertisement of a capital residence and a desirable pleasure-ground. To take another example: the great features of the character of Hotspur are obvious to the most superficial reader. We at once perceive that his courage is splendid, his thirst of glory intense, his animal spirits high, his temper careless, arbitrary, and petulant; that he indulges his own humour without caring whose feelings he may wound, or whose enmity he may provoke, by his levity. Thus far criticism will go. But something is still wanting. A man might have all those qualities, and every other quality which the most minute examiner can introduce into his catalogue of the virtues and faults of Hotspur, and yet he would not be Hotspur. Almost everything that we have said of him applies equally to Falconbridge. Yet in the mouth of Falconbridge most of his speeches would seem out of place. In real life this perpetually occurs. We are sensible of wide differences between men whom, if we were required to describe them, we should describe in almost the same terms. If we were attempting to draw elaborate characters of them, we should scarcely be able to point out any strong distinction; yet we approach them with feelings altogether dissimilar. We cannot conceive of them as using the expressions or the gestures of each other. Let us suppose that a zoologist should attempt to give an account of some animal, a porcupine for instance, to people who had never seen it. The porcupine, he might say, is of the class mammalia, and the order glires. There are whiskers on its face; it is two feet long; it has four toes before, five behind, two fore teeth, and eight grinders. Its body is covered with hair and quills. And, when all this has been said, would any one of the auditors have formed a just idea of a porcupine? Would any two of them have formed the same idea? There might exist innumerable races of animals, possessing all the characteristics which have been mentioned yet altogether unlike to each other. What the description of our naturalist is to a real porcupine, the remarks of criticism are to the images of poetry. What it so imperfectly decomposes it cannot perfectly reconstruct. It is evidently as impossible to produce an Othello or a Macbeth by reversing an analytical process so defective, as it would be for an anatomist to form a living man out of the fragments of his dissecting-room. In both cases the vital principle eludes the finest instruments, and vanishes in the very instant in which its seat is touched. Hence those who, trusting to their critical skill, attempt to write poems give us, not images of things, but catalogues of qualities. Their characters are allegories—not good men and bad men, but cardinal virtues and deadly sins. We seem to have fallen among the acquaintances of our old friend Christian: sometimes we meet Mistrust and Timorous; sometimes Mr Hate-good and Mr Love-lust; and then again Prudence, Piety, and Charity.

That critical discernment is not sufficient to make men poets, is generally allowed. Why it should keep them from becoming poets, is not perhaps equally evident; but the fact is, that poetry requires not an examining but a believing frame of mind. Those feel it most, and write it best, who forget that it is a work of art; to whom its imitations, like the realities from which they are taken, are subjects, not for connoisseurship, but for tears and laughter, resentment and affection; who are too much under the influence of the illusion to admire the genius which has produced it; who are too much frightened for Ulysses in the cave of Polyphemus to care whether the pun about Outis be good or bad; who forget that such a person as Shakspeare ever existed, while they weep and curse with Lear. It is by giving faith to the creations of the imagination that a man becomes a poet. It is by treating those creations as deceptions, and by resolving them, as nearly as possible, into their elements, that he becomes a critic. In the moment in which the skill of the artist is perceived, the spell of the art is broken.

These considerations account for the absurdities into which the greatest writers have fallen, when they have attempted to give general rules for composition, or to pronounce judgment on the works of others. They are unaccustomed to analyse what they feel; they, therefore, perpetually refer their emotions to causes which have not in the slightest degree tended to produce them. They feel pleasure in reading a book. They never consider that this pleasure may be the effect of ideas which some unmeaning expression, striking on the first link of a chain of associations, may have called up in their own minds—that they have themselves furnished to the author the beauties which they admire.

Cervantes is the delight of all classes of readers. Every school-boy thumbs to pieces the most wretched translations of his romance, and knows the lantern jaws of the Knight Errant, and the broad cheeks of the Squire, as well as the faces of his own playfellows. The most experienced and fastidious judges are amazed at the perfection of that art which extracts inextinguishable laughter from the greatest of human calamities without once violating the reverence due to it; at that discriminating delicacy of touch which makes a character exquisitely ridiculous, without impairing its worth, its grace, or its dignity. In Don Quixote are several dissertations on the principles of poetic and dramatic writing. No passages in the whole work exhibit stronger marks of labour and attention; and no passages in any work with which we are acquainted are more worthless and puerile. In our time they would scarcely obtain admittance into the literary department of the Morning Post. Every reader of the Divine Comedy must be struck by the veneration which Dante expresses for writers far inferior to himself. He will not lift up his eyes from the ground in the presence of Brunetto, all whose works are not worth the worst of his own hundred cantos. He does not venture to walk in the same line with the bombastic Statius. His admiration of Virgil is absolute idolatry. If, indeed, it had been excited by the elegant, splendid, and harmonious diction of the Roman poet, it would not have been altogether unreasonable; but it is rather as an authority on all points of philosophy, than as a work of imagination, that he values the Æneid. The most trivial passages he regards as oracles of the highest authority, and of the most recondite meaning. He describes his conductor as the sea of all wisdom—the sun which heals every disordered sight. As he judged of Virgil, the Italians of the fourteenth century judged of him; they were proud of him; they praised him; they struck medals bearing his head; they quarrelled for the honour of possessing his remains; they maintained professors to expound his writings. But what they admired was not that mighty imagination which called a new world into existence, and made all its sights and sounds familiar to the eye and ear of the mind. They said little of those awful and lovely creations on which later critics delight to dwell—Farinata lifting his haughty and tranquil brow from his couch of everlasting fire—the lion-like repose of Sordello—or the light which shone from the celestial smile of Beatrice. They extolled their great poet for his smattering of ancient literature and history; for his logic and his divinity; for his absurd physics, and his more absurd metaphysics; for everything but that in which he pre-eminently excelled. Like the fool in the story, who ruined his dwelling by digging for gold, which, as he had dreamed, was concealed under its foundations, they laid waste one of the noblest works of human genius, by seeking in it for buried treasures of wisdom which existed only in their own wild reveries. The finest passages were little valued till they had been debased into some monstrous allegory. Louder applause was given to the lecture on fate and free-will, or to the ridiculous astronomical theories, than to those tremendous lines which disclose the secrets of the tower of hunger, or to that half-told tale of guilty love, so passionate and so full of tears.

We do not mean to say that the contemporaries of Dante read with less emotion than their descendants of Ugolino groping among the wasted corpses of his children, or of Francesca starting at the tremulous kiss and dropping the fatal volume. Far from it. We believe that they admired these things less than ourselves, but that they felt them more. We should perhaps say that they felt them too much to admire them. The progress of a nation from barbarism to civilisation produces a change similar to that which takes place during the progress of an individual from infancy to mature age. What man does not remember with regret the first time that he read Robinson Crusoe? Then, indeed, he was unable to appreciate the powers of the writer; or, rather, he neither knew nor cared whether the book had a writer at all. He probably thought it not half so fine as some rant of Macpherson about dark-browed Foldath, and white-bosomed Strinadona. He now values Fingal and Temora only as showing with how little evidence a story may be believed, and with how little merit a book may be popular. Of the romance of Defoe he entertains the highest opinion. He perceives the hand of a master in ten thousand touches which formerly he passed by without notice. But, though he understands the merits of the narrative better than formerly, he is far less interested by it. Xury, and Friday, and pretty Poll, the boat with the shoulder-of-mutton sail, and the canoe which could not be brought down to the water edge, the tent with its hedge and ladders, the preserve of kids, and the den where the old goat died, can never again be to him the realities which they were. The days when his favourite volume set him upon making wheelbarrows and chairs, upon digging caves and fencing huts in the garden, can never return. Such is the law of our nature. Our judgment ripens; our imagination decays. We cannot at once enjoy the flowers of the spring of life and the fruits of its autumn, the pleasures of close investigation and those of agreeable error. We cannot sit at once in the front of the stage and behind the scenes. We cannot be under the illusion of the spectacle, while we are watching the movements of the ropes and pulleys which dispose it.

The chapter in which Fielding describes the behaviour of Partridge at the theatre affords so complete an illustration of our proposition, that we cannot refrain from quoting some parts of it.

"Partridge gave that credit to Mr Garrick which he had denied to Jones, and fell into so violent a trembling that his knees knocked against each other. Jones asked him what was the matter, and whether he was afraid of the warrior upon the stage?—'O, la, sir,' said he, 'I perceive now it is what you told me. I am not afraid of anything, for I know it is but a play; and if it was really a ghost, it could do one no harm at such a distance and in so much company; and yet, if I was frightened, I am not the only person.'—'Why, who,' cries Jones, 'dost thou take to be such a coward here besides thyself?'—'Nay, you may call me a coward if you will; but if that little man there upon the stage is not frightened, I never saw any man frightened in my life.' . . . He sat with his eyes fixed partly on the ghost and partly on Hamlet, and with his mouth open; the same passions which succeeded each other in Hamlet, succeeding likewise in him. . . .

"Little more worth remembering occurred during the play, at the end of which Jones asked him which of the players he liked best? To this he answered, with some appearance of indignation at the question, 'The King, without doubt.'—'Indeed, Mr Partridge,' says Mrs Miller, 'you are not of the same opinion with the town; for they are all agreed that Hamlet is acted by the best player who was ever on the stage.'—'He the best player!' cries Partridge, with a contemptuous sneer; 'why I could act as well as he myself. I am sure if I had seen a ghost, I should have looked in the very same manner, and done just as he did. And then to be sure, in that scene, as you called it, between him and his mother, where you told me he acted so fine, why any man, that is, any good man, that had such a mother, would have done exactly the same. I know you are only joking with me ; but indeed, madam, though I never was at a play in London, yet I have seen acting before in the country, and the King for my money ; he speaks all his words distinctly, and half as loud again as the other. Anybody may see he is an actor.' "

In this excellent passage Partridge is represented as a very bad theatrical critic. But none of those who laugh at him possess the tithe of his sensibility to theatrical excellence. He admires in the wrong place ; but he trembles in the right place. It is indeed because he is so much excited by the acting of Garrick, that he ranks him below the strutting, mouthing performer, who personates the King. So, we have heard it said that, in some parts of Spain and Portugal, an actor who should represent a depraved character finely, instead of calling down the applauses of the audience, is hissed and pelted without mercy. It would be the same in England, if we, for one moment, thought that Shylock or Iago was standing before us. While the dramatic art was in its infancy at Athens, it produced similar effects on the ardent and imaginative spectators. It is said that they blamed Æschylus for frightening them into fits with his Furies. Herodotus tells us that, when Phrynichus produced his tragedy on the fall of Miletus, they fined him in a penalty of a thousand drachmas for torturing their feelings by so pathetic an exhibition. They did not regard him as a great artist, but merely as a man who had given them pain. When they woke from the distressing illusion, they treated the author of it as they would have treated a messenger who should have brought them fatal and alarming tidings which turned out to be false. In the same manner, a child screams with terror at the sight of a person in an ugly mask. He has perhaps seen the mask put on. But his imagination is too strong for his reason ; and he entreats that it may be taken off.

We should act in the same manner if the grief and horror produced in us by works of the imagination amounted to real torture. But in us these emotions are comparatively languid. They rarely affect our appetite or our sleep. They leave us sufficiently at ease to trace them to their causes, and to estimate the powers which produce them. Our attention is speedily diverted from the images which call forth our tears to the art by which those images have been selected and combined. We applaud the genius of the writer. We applaud our own sagacity and sensibility ; and we are comforted.

Yet, though we think that in the progress of nations towards refinement the reasoning powers are improved at the expense of the imagination, we acknowledge that to this rule there are many apparent exceptions. We are not, however, quite satisfied that they are more than apparent. Men reasoned better, for example, in the time of Elizabeth than in the time of Egbert ; and they also wrote better poetry. But we must distinguish between poetry as a mental act, and poetry as a species of composition. If we take it in the latter sense, its excellence depends not solely on the vigour of the imagination, but partly also on the instruments which the imagination employs. Within certain limits, therefore, poetry may be improving while the poetical faculty is decaying. The vividness of the picture presented to the reader is not necessarily proportioned to the vividness of the prototype which exists in the mind of the writer. In the other arts we see this clearly. Should a man, gifted by nature with all the genius of Canova, attempt to carve a statue without instruction as to the management of his chisel, or attention to the anatomy of the human body, he would produce something compared with which the Highlander at the door of a snuff shop would deserve admiration. If an uninitiated Raphael were to attempt a painting, it would be a mere daub ; indeed, the connoisseurs say that the early works of Raphael are little better. Yet, who can attribute this to want of imagination? Who can doubt that the youth of that great artist was passed amidst an ideal world of beautiful and majestic forms? Or, who will attribute the difference which appears between his first rude essays and his magnificent Transfiguration to a change in the constitution of his mind? In poetry, as in painting and sculpture, it is necessary that the imitator should be well acquainted with that which he undertakes to imitate, and expert in the mechanical part of his art. Genius will not furnish him with a vocabulary : it will not teach him what word most exactly corresponds to his idea, and will most fully convey it to others : it will not make him a great descriptive poet, till he has looked with attention on the face of nature ; or a great dramatist, till he has felt and witnessed much of the influence of the passions. Information and experience are, therefore, necessary ; not for the purpose of strengthening the imagination, which is never so strong as in people incapable of reasoning—savages, children, madmen, and dreamers ; but for the purpose of enabling the artist to communicate his conceptions to others.

In a barbarous age the imagination exercises a despotic power. So strong is the perception of what is unreal that it often overpowers all the passions of the mind and all the sensations of the body. At first, indeed, the phantasm remains undivulged, a hidden treasure, a wordless poetry, an invisible painting, a silent music, a dream of which the pains and pleasures exist to the dreamer alone, a bitterness which the heart only knoweth, a joy with which a stranger intermeddleth not. The machinery, by which ideas are to be conveyed from one person to another, is as yet rude and defective. Between mind and mind there is a great gulf. The imitative arts do not exist, or are in their lowest state. But the actions of men amply prove that the faculty which gives birth to those arts is morbidly active. It is not yet the inspiration of poets and sculptors ; but it is the amusement of the day, the terror of the night, the fertile source of wild superstitions. It turns the clouds into gigantic shapes, and the winds into doleful voices. The belief which springs from it is more absolute and undoubting than any which can be derived from evidence. It resembles the faith which we repose in our own sensations. Thus, the Arab, when covered with wounds, saw nothing but the dark eyes and the green kerchief of a beckoning Houri. The Northern warrior laughed in the pangs of death when he thought of the mead of Valhalla.

The first works of the imagination are, as we have said, poor and rude, not from the want of genius, but from the want of materials. Phidias could have done nothing with an old tree and a fish-bone, or Homer with the language of New Holland.

Yet the effect of these early performances, imperfect as they must necessarily be, is immense. All deficiencies are supplied by the susceptibility of those to whom they are addressed. We all know what pleasure a wooden doll, which may be bought for sixpence, will afford to a little girl. She will require no other company. She will nurse it, dress it, and talk to it all day. No grown-up man takes half so much delight in one of the incomparable babies of Chantrey. In the same manner, savages are more affected by the rude compositions of their bards than nations more advanced in civilisation by the greatest master-pieces of poetry.

In process of time, the instruments by which the imagination works are brought to perfection. Men have not more imagination than their rude ancestors. We strongly suspect that they have much less. But they produce better works of imagination. Thus, up to a certain period, the diminution of the poetical powers is far more than compensated by the improvement of all the appliances and means of which those powers stand in need. Then comes the short period of splendid and consummate excellence. And then, from causes against which it is vain to struggle, poetry begins to decline. The progress of language, which was at first favourable, becomes fatal to it, and, instead of compensating for the decay of the imagination, accelerates that decay, and renders it more obvious. When the adventurer in the Arabian tale anointed one of his eyes with the contents of the magical box, all the riches of the earth, however widely dispersed, however sacredly concealed, became visible to him. But, when he tried the experiment on both eyes, he was struck with blindness. What the enchanted elixir was to the sight of the body, language is to the sight of the imagination. At first it calls up a world of glorious illusions; but, when it becomes too copious, it altogether destroys the visual power.

As the development of the mind proceeds, symbols, instead of being employed to convey images, are substituted for them. Civilised men think as they trade, not in kind, but by means of a circulating medium. In these circumstances, the sciences improve rapidly, and criticism among the rest; but poetry, in the highest sense of the word, disappears. Then comes the dotage of the fine arts, a second childhood, as feeble as the former, and far more hopeless. This is the age of critical poetry, of poetry by courtesy, of poetry to which the memory, the judgment, and the wit contribute far more than the imagination. We readily allow that many works of this description are excellent: we will not contend with those who think them more valuable than the great poems of an earlier period. We only maintain that they belong to a different species of composition, and are produced by a different faculty.

It is some consolation to reflect that this critical school of poetry improves as the science of criticism improves; and that the science of criticism, like every other science, is constantly tending towards perfection. As experiments are multiplied, principles are better understood.

In some countries, in our own for example, there has been an interval between the downfall of the creative school and the rise of the critical, a period during which imagination has been in its decrepitude, and taste in its infancy. Such a revolutionary interregnum as this will be deformed by every species of extravagance.

The first victory of good taste is over the bombast and conceits which deform such times as these. But criticism is still in a very imperfect state. What is accidental is for a long time confounded with what is essential. General theories are drawn from detached facts. How many hours the action of a play may be allowed to occupy,—how many similes an Epic Poet may introduce into his first book,—whether a piece, which is acknowledged to have a beginning and an end, may not be without a middle, and other questions as puerile as these, formerly occupied the attention of men of letters in France, and even in this country. Poets, in such circumstances as these, exhibit all the narrowness and feebleness of the criticism by which their manner has been fashioned. From outrageous absurdity they are preserved indeed by their timidity. But they perpetually sacrifice nature and reason to arbitrary canons of taste. In their eagerness to avoid the *mala prohibita* of a foolish code, they are perpetually rushing on the *mala in se.* Their great predecessors, it is true, were as bad critics as themselves, or perhaps worse, but those predecessors, as we have attempted to show, were inspired by a faculty independent of criticism, and, therefore, wrote well while they judged ill.

In time men begin to take more rational and comprehensive views of literature. The analysis of poetry, which, as we have remarked, must at best be imperfect, approaches nearer and nearer to exactness. The merits of the wonderful models of former times are justly appreciated. The frigid productions of a later age are rated at no more than their proper value. Pleasing and ingenious imitations of the manner of the great masters appear. Poetry has a partial revival, a Saint Martin's Summer, which, after a period of dreariness and decay, agreeably reminds us of the splendour of its June. A second harvest is gathered in ; though, growing on a spent soil, it has not the heart of the former. Thus, in the present age, Monti has successfully imitated the style of Dante ; and something of the Elizabethan inspiration has been caught by several eminent countrymen of our own. But never will Italy produce another Inferno, or England another Hamlet. We look on the beauties of the modern imitations with feelings similar to those with which we see flowers disposed in vases, to ornament the drawing-rooms of a capital. We doubtless regard them with pleasure, with greater pleasure, perhaps, because, in the midst of a place ungenial to them, they remind us of the distant spots on which they flourish in spontaneous exuberance. But we miss the sap, the freshness, and the bloom. Or, if we may borrow another illustration from Queen Scheherezade, we would compare the writers of this school to the jewellers who were employed to complete the unfinished window of the palace of Aladdin. Whatever skill or cost could do was done. Palace and bazaar were ransacked for precious stones. Yet the artists, with all their dexterity, with all their assiduity, and with all their vast means, were unable to produce anything comparable to the wonders which a spirit of a higher order had wrought in a single night.

The history of every literature with which we are acquainted confirms, we think, the principles which we have laid down. In Greece we see the imaginative school of poetry gradually fading into the critical. Æschylus and Pindar were succeeded by Sophocles, Sophocles by Euripides, Euripides by the Alexandrian versifiers. Of these last, Theocritus alone has left compositions which deserve to be read. The splendour and grotesque fairyland of the Old Comedy, rich with such gorgeous hues, peopled with such fantastic shapes, and vocal alternately with the sweetest peals of music and the loudest bursts of elvish laughter, disappeared for ever. The master-pieces of the New Comedy are known to us by Latin translations of extraordinary merit. From these translations, and from the expressions of the ancient critics, it is clear that the original compositions were distinguished by grace and sweetness, that they sparkled with wit, and abounded with pleasing sentiment ; but that the creative power was gone. Julius Cæsar called Terence a half Menander,—a sure proof that Menander was not a quarter Aristophanes.

The literature of the Romans was merely a continuation of the literature of the Greeks. The pupils started from the point at which their masters had, in the course of many generations arrived. They thus almost wholly missed the period of original invention. The only Latin poets whose writings exhibit much vigour of imagination are Lucretius and Catullus. The Augustan age produced nothing equal to their finer passages.

In France that licensed jester, whose jingling cap and motley coat concealed more genius than ever mustered in the saloon of Ninon or of Madame Géoffrin, was succeeded by writers as decorous and as tiresome as gentlemen ushers.

The poetry of Italy and of Spain has undergone the same change. But nowhere has the revolution been more complete and violent than in England. The same person who, when a boy, had clapped his thrilling hands at the first representation of the Tempest might, without attaining to a marvellous longevity, have lived to read the earlier works of Prior and Addison. The change, we believe, must, sooner or later, have taken place. But its progress was accelerated, and its character modified, by the political occurrences of the times, and particularly by two events, the closing of the theatres under the Commonwealth, and the restoration of the House of Stuart.

We have said that the critical and poetical faculties are not only distinct, but almost incompatible. The state of our literature during the reigns of Elizabeth and James the First is a strong confirmation of this remark. The greatest works of imagination that the world has ever seen were produced at that period. The national taste, in the meantime, was to the last degree detestable. Alliterations, puns, antithetical forms of expression lavishly employed where no corresponding opposition existed between the thoughts expressed, strained allegories, pedantic allusions, everything, in short, quaint and affected, in matter and manner, made up what was then considered as fine writing. The eloquence of the bar, the pulpit, and the council-board, was deformed by conceits which would have disgraced the rhyming shepherds of an Italian academy. The king quibbled on the throne. We might, indeed, console ourselves by reflecting that his majesty was a fool. But the chancellor quibbled in concert from the wool-sack : and the chancellor was Francis Bacon. It is needless to mention Sidney and the whole tribe of Euphuists ; for Shakspeare himself, the greatest poet that ever lived, falls into the same fault whenever he means to be particularly fine. While he abandons himself to the impulse of his imagination, his compositions are not only the sweetest and the most sublime, but also the most faultless, that the world has ever seen. But, as soon as his critical powers come into play, he sinks to the level of Cowley ; or rather he does ill what Cowley did well. All that is bad in his works is bad elaborately, and of malice aforethought. The only thing wanting to make them perfect was, that he should never have troubled himself with thinking whether they were good or not. Like the angels in Milton, he sinks "with compulsion and laborious flight." His natural tendency is upwards. That he may soar, it is only necessary that he should not struggle to fall. He resembles an American Cacique, who, possessing in unmeasured abundance the metals which in polished societies are esteemed the most precious, was utterly unconscious of their value, and gave up treasures more valuable than the imperial crowns of other countries, to secure some gaudy and far-fetched but worthless bauble, a plated button, or a necklace of coloured glass.

We have attempted to show that, as knowledge is extended and as the reason develops itself, the imitative arts decay. We should, therefore, expect that the corruption of poetry would commence in the educated classes of society. And this, in fact, is almost constantly the case. The few great works of imagination which appear in a critical age are, almost without exception, the works of uneducated men. Thus, at a time when persons of quality translated French romances, and when the universities celebrated royal deaths in verses about tritons and fauns, a preaching tinker produced the Pilgrim's Progress. And thus a ploughman startled a generation which had thought Hayley and Beattie great poets, with the adventures of Tam O'Shanter. Even in the latter part of the reign of Elizabeth the fashionable poetry had degenerated. It retained few vestiges of the imagination of earlier times. It had not yet been subjected to the rules of good taste. Affectation had completely tainted madrigals and sonnets. The grotesque conceits and the tuneless numbers of Donne were, in the time of James, the favourite models of composition at Whitehall and at the Temple. But, though the literature of the Court was in its decay, the literature of the people was in its perfection. The Muses had taken sanctuary in the theatres, the haunts of a class whose taste was not better than that of the Right Honourables and singular good Lords who admired metaphysical love-verses, but whose imagination retained all its freshness and vigour ; whose censure and approbation might be erroneously bestowed, but whose tears and laughter was never in the wrong. The infection which had tainted lyric and didactic poetry had but slightly and partially touched the drama. While the noble and the learned were comparing eyes to burning-glasses, and tears to terrestrial globes, coyness to an enthymeme, absence to a pair of compasses, and an unrequited passion to the fortieth remainder-man in an entail, Juliet leaning from the balcony, and Miranda smiling over the chess-board, sent home many spectators, as kind and simple-hearted as the master and mistress of Fletcher's Ralpho, to cry themselves to sleep.

No species of fiction is so delightful to us as the old English drama. Even its inferior productions possess a charm not to be found in any other kind of poetry. It is the most lucid mirror that ever was held up to nature. The creations of the great dramatists of Athens produce the effect of magnificent sculptures, conceived by a mighty imagination, polished with the utmost delicacy, embodying ideas of ineffable majesty and beauty, but cold, pale, and rigid, with no bloom on the cheek, and no speculation in the eye. In all the draperies, the figures, and the faces, in the lovers and the tyrants, the Bacchanals and the Furies, there is the same marble chillness and deadness. Most of the characters of the French stage resemble the waxen gentlemen and ladies in the window of a perfumer, rouged, curled, and bedizened, but fixed in such stiff attitudes, and staring with eyes expressive of such utter unmeaningness, that they cannot produce an illusion for a single moment. In the English plays alone is to be found the warmth, the mellowness, and the reality of painting. We know the minds of the men and women, as we know the faces of the men and women of Vandyke.

The excellence of these works is in a great measure the result of two peculiarities, which the critics of the French school consider as defects,—from the mixture of tragedy and comedy, and from the length and extent of the action. The former is necessary to render the drama a just representation of a world in which the laughers and the weepers are perpetually jostling each other,— in which every event has its serious and ludicrous side. The latter enables us to form an intimate acquaintance with characters with which we could not possibly become familiar during the few hours to which the unities restrict the poet. In this respect, the works of Shakspeare, in particular, are miracles of art. In a piece, which may be read aloud in three hours, we see a character gradually unfold all its recesses to us. We see it change with the change of circumstances. The petulant youth rises into the politic and warlike sovereign. The profuse and courteous philanthropist sours into a hater and scorner of his kind. The tyrant is altered, by the chastening of affliction, into a pensive moralist. The veteran general, distinguished by coolness, sagacity, and self-command, sinks under a conflict between love strong as death, and jealousy cruel as the grave. The brave and loyal subject passes, step by step, to the extremities of human depravity. We trace his progress, from the first dawnings of unlawful ambition to the cynical melancholy of his impenitent remorse. Yet, in these pieces, there are no unnatural transitions. Nothing is omitted: nothing is crowded. Great as are the changes, narrow as is the compass within which they are exhibited, they shock us as little as the gradual alterations of those familiar faces which we see every evening and every morning. The magical skill of the poet resembles that of the Dervise in the Spectator, who condensed all the events of seven years into the single moment during which the king held his head under the water.

It is deserving of remark, that, at the time of which we speak, the plays even of men not eminently distinguished by genius,—such, for example, as Jonson,—were far superior to the best works of imagination in other departments. Therefore, though we conceive that, from causes which we have already investigated, our poetry must necessarily have declined, we think that, unless its fate had been accelerated by external attacks, it might have enjoyed an euthanasia, that genius might have been kept alive by the drama till its place could, in some degree, be supplied by taste,—that there would have been scarcely any interval between the age of sublime invention and that of agreeable imitation. The works of Shakspeare, which were not appreciated with any degree of justice before the middle of the eighteenth century, might then have been the recognised standards of excellence during the latter part of the seventeenth; and he and the great Elizabethan writers might have been almost immediately succeeded by a generation of poets similar to those who adorn our own times.

But the Puritans drove imagination from its last asylum. They prohibited theatrical representations, and stigmatised the whole race of dramatists as enemies of morality and religion. Much that is objectionable may be found in the writers whom they reprobated; but whether they took the best measures for stopping the evil appears to us very doubtful, and must, we think, have appeared doubtful to themselves, when, after the lapse of a few years, they saw the unclean spirit whom they had cast out return to his old haunts, with seven others fouler than himself.

By the extinction of the drama, the fashionable school of poetry,—a school without truth of sentiment or harmony of versification,—without the powers of an earlier, or the correctness of a later age,—was left to enjoy undisputed ascendency. A vicious ingenuity, a morbid quickness to perceive resemblances and analogies between things apparently heterogeneous, constituted almost its only claim to admiration. Suckling was dead. Milton was absorbed in political and theological controversy.

If Waller differed from the Cowleian sect of writers, he differed for the worse. He had as little poetry as they, and much less wit; nor is the languor of his verses less offensive than the ruggedness of theirs. In Denham alone the faint dawn of a better manner was discernible.

But, low as was the state of our poetry during the civil war and the Protectorate, a still deeper fall was at hand. Hitherto our literature had been idiomatic. In mind as in situation we had been islanders. The revolutions in our taste, like the revolutions in our government, had been settled without the interference of strangers. Had this state of things continued, the same just principles of reasoning which, about this time, were applied with unprecedented success to every part of philosophy would soon have conducted our ancestors to a sounder code of criticism. There were already strong signs of improvement. Our prose had at length worked itself clear from those quaint conceits which still deformed almost every metrical composition. The parliamentary debates, and the diplomatic correspondence of that eventful period, had contributed much to this reform. In such bustling times, it was absolutely necessary to speak and write to the purpose. The absurdities of Puritanism had, perhaps, done more. At the time when that odious style, which deforms the writings of Hall and of Lord Bacon, was almost universal, had appeared that stupendous work, the English Bible,—a book which, if everything else in our language should perish, would alone suffice to show the whole extent of its beauty and power. The respect which the translators felt for the original prevented them from adding any of the hideous decorations then in fashion. The groundwork of the version, indeed, was of an earlier age. The familiarity with which the Puritans, on almost every occasion, used the Scriptural phrases was no doubt very ridiculous; but it produced good effects. It was a cant; but it drove out a cant far more offensive.

The highest kind of poetry is, in a great measure, independent of those circumstances which regulate the style of composition in prose. But with that inferior species of poetry which succeeds to it the case is widely different. In a few years, the good sense and good taste which had weeded out affectation from moral and political treatises would, in the natural course of things, have effected a similar reform in the sonnet and the ode. The rigour of the victorious sectaries had relaxed. A dominant religion is never ascetic. The Government connived at theatrical representations. The influence of Shakspeare was once more felt. But darker days were approaching. A foreign yoke was to be imposed on our literature. Charles, surrounded by the companions of his long exile, returned to govern a nation which ought never to have cast him out or never to have received him back. Every year which he had passed among strangers had rendered him more unfit to rule his countrymen. In France he had seen the refractory magistracy humbled, and royal prerogative, though exercised by a foreign priest in the name of a child, victorious over all opposition. This spectacle naturally gratified a prince to whose family the opposition of Parliaments had been so fatal. Politeness was his solitary good quality. The insults which he had suffered in Scotland had taught him to prize it. The effeminacy and apathy of his disposition fitted him to excel in it. The elegance and vivacity of the French manners fascinated him. With the political maxims and the social habits of his favourite people, he adopted their taste in composition, and, when seated on the throne, soon rendered it fashionable, partly by direct patronage, but still more by that contemptible policy, which, for a time, made England the last of the nations, and raised Louis the Fourteenth to a height of power and fame, such as no French sovereign had ever before attained.

It was to please Charles that rhyme was first introduced into our plays. Thus, a rising blow, which would at any time have been mortal, was dealt to the English Drama, then just recovering from its languishing condition. Two detestable manners, the indigenous and the imported, were now in a state of alternate conflict and amalgamation. The bombastic meanness of the new style was blended with the ingenious absurdity of the old; and the mixture produced something which the world had never before seen, and which, we hope, it will never see again,—something, by the side of which the worst nonsense of all other ages appears to advantage—something, which those who have attempted to caricature it have, against their will, been forced to flatter—of which the tragedy of Bayes is a very favourable specimen. What Lord Dorset observed to Edward Howard might have been addressed to almost all his contemporaries—

"As skilful divers to the bottom fall
Swifter than those who cannot swim at all;
So, in this way of writing without thinking,
Thou hast a strange alacrity in sinking."

From this reproach some clever men of the world must be excepted, and among them Dorset himself. Though by no means great poets, or even good versifiers, they always wrote with meaning, and sometimes with wit. Nothing indeed more strongly shows to what a miserable state literature had fallen, than the immense superiority which the occasional rhymes, carelessly thrown on paper by men of this class, possess over the elaborate productions of almost all the professed authors. The reigning taste was so bad, that the success of a writer was in inverse proportion to his labour, and to his desire of excellence. An exception must be made for Butler, who had as much wit and learning as Cowley, and who knew, what Cowley never knew, how to use them. A great command of good homely English distinguishes him still more from the other writers of the time. As for Gondibert, those may criticise it who can read it. Imagination was extinct. Taste was depraved. Poetry, driven from palaces, colleges, and theatres, had found an asylum in the obscure dwelling where a Great Man, born out of due season, in disgrace, penury, pain, and blindness, still kept uncontaminated a character and a genius worthy of a better age.

Everything about Milton is wonderful; but nothing is so wonderful as that, in an age so unfavourable to poetry, he should have produced the greatest of modern epic poems. We are not sure that this is not in some degree to be attributed to his want of sight. The imagination is notoriously most active when the external world is shut out. In sleep its illusions are perfect. They produce all the effect of realities. In darkness its visions are always more distinct than in the light. Every person who amuses himself with what is called building castles in the air must have experienced this. We know artists who, before they attempt to draw a face from memory, close their eyes, that they may recall a more perfect image of the features and the expression. We are therefore inclined to believe that the genius of Milton may have been preserved from the influence of times so unfavourable to it by his infirmity. Be this as it may, his works at first enjoyed a very small share of popularity. To be neglected by his contemporaries was the penalty which he paid for surpassing them. His great poem was not generally studied or admired till writers far inferior to him had, by obsequiously cringing to the public taste, acquired sufficient favour to reform it.

Of these, Dryden was the most eminent. Amidst the crowd of authors who, during the earlier years of Charles the Second, courted notoriety by every species of absurdity and affectation, he speedily became conspicuous. No man exercised so much influence on the age. The reason is obvious. On no man did the age exercise so much influence. He was perhaps the greatest of those whom we have designated as the critical poets; and his literary career exhibited, on a reduced scale, the whole history of the school to which he belonged,—the rudeness and extravagance of its infancy,—the propriety, the grace, the dignified good sense, the temperate splendour of its maturity. His imagination was torpid, till it was awakened by his judgment. He began with quaint parallels and empty mouthing. He gradually acquired the energy of the satirist, the gravity of the moralist, the rapture of the lyric poet. The revolution through which English literature has been passing, from the time of Cowley to that of Scott, may be seen in miniature within the compass of his volumes.

His life divides itself into two parts. There is some debatable ground on the common frontier; but the line may be drawn with tolerable accuracy. The year 1678 is that on which we should be inclined to fix as the date of a great change in his manner. During the preceding period appeared some of his courtly panegyrics—his Annus Mirabilis, and most of his plays; indeed, all his rhyming tragedies. To the subsequent period belong his best dramas,—All for Love, The Spanish Friar, and Sebastian,—his satires, his translations, his didactic poems, his fables, and his odes.

Of the small pieces which were presented to chancellors and princes it would scarcely be fair to speak. The greatest advantage which the Fine Arts derive from the extension of knowledge is, that the patronage of individuals becomes unnecessary. Some writers still affect to regret the age of patronage. None but bad writers have reason to regret it. It is always an age of general ignorance. Where ten thousand readers are eager for the appearance of a book, a small contribution from each makes up a splendid remuneration for the author. Where literature is a luxury, confined to few, each of them must pay high. If the Empress Catherine, for example, wanted an epic poem, she must have wholly supported the poet;—just as, in a remote country village, a man who wants a muttonchop is sometimes forced to take the whole sheep;—a thing which never happens where the demand is large. But men who pay largely for the gratification of their taste, will expect to have it united with some gratification to their vanity. Flattery is carried to a shameless extent; and the habit of flattery almost inevitably introduces a false taste into composition. Its language is made up of hyperbolical commonplaces,—offensive from their triteness,—still more offensive from their extravagance. In no school is the trick of overstepping the modesty of nature so speedily acquired. The writer, accustomed to find exaggeration acceptable and necessary on one subject, uses it on all. It is not strange, therefore, that the early panegyrical verses of Dryden should be made up of meanness and bombast. They abound with the conceits which his immediate predecessors had brought into fashion. But his language and his versification were already far superior to theirs.

The Annus Mirabilis shows great command of expression, and a fine ear for heroic rhyme. Here its merits end. Not only has it no claim to be called poetry, but it seems to be the work of a man who could never, by any possibility, write poetry. Its affected similes are the best part of it. Gaudy weeds present a more encouraging spectacle than utter barrenness. There is scarcely a single stanza in this long work to which the imagination seems to have contributed anything. It is produced, not by creation, but by construction. It is made up, not of pictures, but of inferences. We will give a single instance, and certainly a favourable instance,—a quatrain which Johnson has praised. Dryden is describing the sea-fight with the Dutch—

> "Amidst whole heaps of spices lights a ball ;
> And now their odours armed against them fly.
> Some preciously by shattered porcelain fall,
> And some by aromatic splinters die."

The poet should place his readers, as nearly as possible, in the situation of the sufferers or the spectators. His narration ought to produce feelings similar to those which would be excited by the event itself. Is this the case here? Who, in a sea-fight, ever thought of the price of the china which beats out the brains of a sailor ; or of the odour of the splinter which shatters his leg? It is not by an act of the imagination, at once calling up the scene before the interior eye, but by painful meditation,—by turning the subject round and round,—by tracing out facts into remote consequences,—that these incongruous topics are introduced into the description. Homer, it is true, perpetually uses epithets which are not peculiarly appropriate. Achilles is the swift-footed, when he is sitting still. Ulysses is the much-enduring, when he has nothing to endure. Every spear casts a long shadow, every ox has crooked horns, and every woman a high bosom, though these particulars may be quite beside the purpose. In our old ballads a similar practice prevails. The gold is always red, and the ladies always gay, though nothing whatever may depend on the hue of the gold, or the temper of the ladies. But these adjectives are mere customary additions. They merge in the substantives to which they are attached. If they at all colour the idea, it is with a tinge so slight as in no respect to alter the general effect. In the passage which we have quoted from Dryden the case is very different. *Preciously* and *aromatic* divert our whole attention to themselves, and dissolve the image of the battle in a moment. The whole poem reminds us of Lucan, and of the worst parts of Lucan,—the sea-fight in the Bay of Marseilles, for example. The description of the two fleets during the night is perhaps the only passage which ought to be exempted from this censure. If it was from the Annus Mirabilis that Milton formed his opinion, when he pronounced Dryden a good rhymer but no poet, he certainly judged correctly. But Dryden was, as we have said, one of those writers in whom the period of imagination does not precede, but follow, the period of observation and reflection.

His plays, his rhyming plays in particular, are admirable subjects for those who wish to study the morbid anatomy of the drama. He was utterly destitute of the power of exhibiting real human beings. Even in the far inferior talent of composing characters out of those elements into which the imperfect process of our reason can resolve them, he was very deficient. His men are not even good personifications ; they are not well-assorted assemblages of qualities. Now and then, indeed, he seizes a very coarse and marked distinction, and gives us, not a likeness, but a strong caricature, in which a single peculiarity is protruded, and everything else neglected ; like the Marquis of Granby at an inn-door, whom we know by nothing but his baldness ; or Wilkes, who is Wilkes only in his squint. These are the best specimens of his skill. For most of his pictures seem, like Turkey carpets, to have been expressly designed not to resemble anything in the heavens above, in the earth beneath, or in the waters under the earth.

The latter manner he practises most frequently in his tragedies, the former in his comedies. The comic characters are, without mixture, loathsome and despicable. The men of Etherege and Vanbrugh are bad enough. Those of Smollett are perhaps worse. But they do not approach to the Celadons, the Wildbloods, the Woodalls, and the Rhodophils of Dryden. The vices of these last are set off by a certain fierce hard impudence, to which we know nothing comparable. Their love is the appetite of beasts ; their friendship the confederacy of knaves. The ladies seem to have been expressly created to form helps meet for such gentlemen. In deceiving and insulting their old fathers they do not perhaps exceed the license which, by immemorial prescription, has been allowed to heroines. But they also cheat at cards, rob strong boxes, put up their favours to auction, betray their friends, abuse their rivals in the style of Billingsgate, and invite their lovers in the language of the Piazza. These, it must be remembered, are not the valets and waiting-women, the Mascarilles and Nerines, but the recognised heroes and heroines who appear as the representatives of good society, and who, at the end of the fifth act, marry and live very happily ever after. The sensuality, baseness, and malice of their natures is unredeemed by any quality of a different description,—by any touch of kindness,—or even by any honest burst of hearty hatred and revenge. We are in a world where there is no humanity, no veracity, no sense of shame,—a world for which any good-natured man would gladly take in exchange the society of Milton's devils. But as soon as we enter the regions of Tragedy, we find a great change. There is no lack of fine sentiment there. Metastasio is surpassed in his own department. Scuderi is out-scuderied. We are introduced to people whose proceedings we can trace to no motive,—of whose feelings we can form no more idea than of a sixth sense. We have left a race of creatures, whose love is as delicate and affectionate as the passion which an alderman feels for a turtle. We find ourselves among beings, whose love is a purely disinterested emotion,—a loyalty extending to passive obedience,—a religion, like that of the Quietists, unsupported by any sanction of hope or fear. We see nothing but despotism without power, and sacrifices without compensation.

We will give a few instances. In Aurengzebe, Arimant, governor of Agra, falls in love with his prisoner Indamora. She rejects his suit with scorn ; but assures him that she shall make great use of her power over him. He threatens to be angry. She answers, very coolly :

> "Do not : your anger, like your love, is vain :
> Whene'er I please, you must be pleased again.
> Knowing what power I have your will to bend,
> I'll use it ; for I need just such a friend."

This is no idle menace. She soon brings a letter addressed to his rival, —orders him to read it,—asks him whether he thinks it sufficiently tender,—and finally commands him to carry it himself. Such tyranny as this, it may be thought, would justify resistance. Arimant does indeed venture to remonstrate :—

"This fatal paper rather let me tear,
Than, like Bellerophon, my sentence bear."

The answer of the lady is incomparable :—

"You may ; but 'twill not be your best advice ;
'Twill only give me pains of writing twice.
You know you must obey me, soon or late.
Why should you vainly struggle with your fate?"

Poor Arimant seems to be of the same opinion. He mutters something about fate and free-will, and walks off with the billet-doux.

In the Indian Emperor, Montezuma presents Almeria with a garland as a token of his love, and offers to make her his queen. She replies :—

"I take this garland, not as given by you ;
But as my merit's and my beauty's due ;
As for the crown which you, my slave, possess,
To share it with you would but make me less."

In return for such proofs of tenderness as these, her admirer consents to murder his two sons and a benefactor to whom he feels the warmest gratitude. Lyndaraxa, in the Conquest of Granada, assumes the same lofty tone with Abdelmelech. He complains that she smiles upon his rival.

"*Lynd.* And when did I my power so far resign,
That you should regulate each look of mine?
Abdel. Then, when you gave your love, you gave that power.
Lynd. 'Twas during pleasure—'tis revoked this hour.
Abdel. I'll hate you, and this visit is my last.
Lynd. Do, if you can : you know I hold you fast."

That these passages violate all historical propriety, that sentiments to which nothing similar was ever even affected except by the cavaliers of Europe, are transferred to Mexico and Agra, is a light accusation. We have no objection to a conventional world, an Illyrian puritan, or a Bohemian seaport. While the faces are good, we care little about the back-ground. Sir Joshua Reynolds says that the curtains and hangings in an historical painting ought to be, not velvet or cotton, but merely drapery. The same principle should be applied to poetry and romance. The truth of character is the first object ; the truth of place and time is to be considered only in the second place. Puff himself could tell the actor to turn out his toes, and remind him that Keeper Hatton was a great dancer. We wish that, in our own time, a writer of a very different order from Puff had not too often forgotten human nature in the niceties of upholstery, millinery, and cookery.

We blame Dryden, not because the persons of his dramas are not Moors or Americans, but because they are not men and women ;—not because love, such as he represents it, could not exist in a harem or in a wigwam, but because it could not exist anywhere. As is the love of his heroes, such are all their other emotions. All their qualities, their courage, their generosity, their pride, are on the same colossal scale.

Justice and prudence are virtues which can exist only in a moderate degree, and which change their nature and their name if pushed to excess. Of justice and prudence, therefore, Dryden leaves his favourites destitute. He did not care to give them what he could not give without measure. The tyrants and ruffians are merely the heroes altered by a few touches, similar to those which transformed the honest face of Sir Roger de Coverley into the Saracen's head. Through the grin and frown the original features are still perceptible.

It is in the tragi-comedies that these absurdities strike us most. The two races of men, or rather the angels and the baboons, are there presented to us together. We meet in one scene with nothing but gross, selfish, unblushing, lying libertines of both sexes, who, as a punishment, we suppose, for their depravity, are condemned to talk nothing but prose. But, as soon as we meet with people who speak in verse, we know that we are in society which would have enraptured the Cathos and Madelon of Moliere, in society for which Oroondates would have too little of the lover, and Clelia too much of the coquette.

As Dryden was unable to render his plays interesting by means of that which is the peculiar and appropriate excellence of the drama, it was necessary that he should find some substitute for it. In his comedies he supplied its place, sometimes by wit, but more frequently by intrigue, by disguises, mistakes of persons, dialogues at cross purposes, hair-breadth escapes, perplexing concealments, and surprising disclosures. He thus succeeded at least in making these pieces very amusing.

In his tragedies he trusted, and not altogether without reason, to his diction and his versification. It was on this account, in all probability, that he so eagerly adopted, and so reluctantly abandoned, the practice of rhyming in his plays. What is unnatural appears less unnatural in that species of verse than in lines which approach more nearly to common conversation ; and in the management of the heroic couplet Dryden has never been equalled. It is unnecessary to urge any arguments against a fashion now universally condemned. But it is worthy of observation, that, though Dryden was deficient in that talent which blank verse exhibits to the greatest advantage, and was certainly the best writer of heroic rhyme in our language, yet the plays which have, from the time of their first appearance, been considered as his best, are in blank verse. No experiment can be more decisive.

It must be allowed that the worst even of the rhyming tragedies contains good description and magnificent rhetoric. But, even when we forget that they are plays, and, passing by their dramatic improprieties, consider them with reference to the language, we are perpetually disgusted by passages which it is difficult to conceive how any author could have written, or any audience have tolerated, rants in which the raving violence of the manner forms a strange contrast with the abject tameness of the thought. The author laid the whole fault on the audience, and declared that, when he wrote them, he considered them bad enough to please. This defence is unworthy of a man of genius, and, after all, is no defence. Otway pleased without rant; and so might Dryden have done, if he had possessed the powers of Otway. The fact is, that he had a tendency to bombast, which, though subsequently corrected by time and thought, was never wholly removed, and which showed itself in performances not designed to please the rude mob of the theatre.

Some indulgent critics have represented this failing as an indication of genius, as the profusion of unlimited wealth, the wantonness of exuberant vigour. To us it seems to bear a nearer affinity to the tawdriness of poverty, or the spasms and convulsions of weakness. Dryden surely had not more imagination than Homer, Dante, or Milton, who never fall into this vice. The swelling diction of Æschylus and Isaiah resembles that of Almanzor and Maximin no more than the tumidity of a muscle resembles the tumidity of a boil. The former is symptomatic of health and strength, the latter of debility and disease. If ever Shakspeare rants, it is not when his imagination is hurrying him along, but when he is hurrying his imagination along,—when his mind is for a moment jaded,—when, as was said of Euripides, he resembles a lion, who excites his own fury by lashing himself with his tail. What happened to Shakspeare from the occasional suspension of his powers happened to Dryden from constant impotence. He, like his confederate Lee, had judgment enough to appreciate the great poets of the preceding age, but not judgment enough to shun competition with them. He felt and admired their wild and daring sublimity. That it belonged to another age than that in which he lived and required other talents than those which he possessed, that, in aspiring to emulate it, he was wasting, in a hopeless attempt, powers which might render him pre-eminent in a different career, was a lesson which he did not learn till late. As those knavish enthusiasts, the French prophets, courted inspiration by mimicking the writhings, swoonings, and gaspings which they considered as its symptoms, he attempted, by affected fits of poetical fury, to bring on a real paroxysm; and, like them, he got nothing but his distortions for his pains.

Horace very happily compares those who, in his time, imitated Pindar to the youth who attempted to fly to heaven on waxen wings, and who experienced so fatal and ignominious a fall. His own admirable good sense preserved him from this error, and taught him to cultivate a style in which excellence was within his reach. Dryden had not the same self-knowledge. He saw that the greatest poets were never so successful as when they rushed beyond the ordinary bounds, and that some inexplicable good fortune preserved them from tripping even when they staggered on the brink of nonsense. He did not perceive that they were guided and sustained by a power denied to himself. They wrote from the dictation of the imagination; and they found a response in the imaginations of others. He, on the contrary, sat down to work himself, by reflection and argument, into a deliberate wildness, a rational frenzy.

In looking over the admirable designs which accompany the Faust, we have always been much struck by one which represents the wizard and the tempter riding at full speed. The demon sits on his furious horse as heedlessly as if he were reposing on a chair. That he should keep his saddle in such a posture, would seem impossible to any who did not know that he was secure in the privileges of a superhuman nature. The attitude of Faust, on the contrary, is the perfection of horsemanship. Poets of the first order might safely write as desperately as Mephistopheles rode. But Dryden, though admitted to communion with higher spirits, though armed with a portion of their power, and intrusted with some of their secrets, was of another race. What they might securely venture to do, it was madness in him to attempt. It was necessary that taste and critical science should supply his deficiencies.

We will give a few examples. Nothing can be finer than the description of Hector at the Grecian wall:—

ὁ δ ἄρ' ἔσθορε φαίδιμος Ἕκτωρ,
Νυκτὶ θοῇ ἀτάλαντος ὑπώπια· λάμπε δὲ χαλκῷ

> *Σμερδαλέῳ, τὸν ἕεστο περὶ χροΐ δοιὰ δὲ χερσὶ*
> *Δοῦρ᾽ ἔχεν· οὐκ ἄν τίς μιν ἐρυκάκοι ἀντιβολήσας,*
> *Νόσφι θεῶν, ὅτ᾽ ἐσᾶλτο πύλας· πυρὶ δ᾽ ὄσσε δεδήει.—*
> *᾽Αυτίκα δ᾽οἱ μὲν τεῖχος ὑπέρβασαν, οἱ δὲ κατ᾽ αὐτὰς*
> *Ποιητὰς ἐσέχυντο πύλας· Δαναιοὶ δ ἐφόβηθεν*
> *Νῆας ἀνὰ γλαφυράς· ὅμαδος δ᾽ ἀλίαστος ἐτύχθη.*

What daring expressions! Yet how significant! How picturesque! Hector seems to rise up in his strength and fury. The gloom of night in his frown,—the fire burning in his eyes,—the javelins and the blazing armour,—the mighty rush through the gates and down the battlements,—the trampling and the infinite roar of the multitude,—everything is with us; everything is real.

Dryden has described a very similar event in Maximin, and has done his best to be sublime, as follows:—

> "There with a forest of their darts he strove,
> And stood like Capaneus defying Jove;
> With his broad sword the boldest beating down,
> Till Fate grew pale, lest he should win the town,
> And turn'd the iron leaves of its dark book
> To make new dooms, or mend what it mistook."

How exquisite is the imagery of the fairy-songs in the Tempest and the Midsummer Night's Dream; Ariel riding through the twilight on the bat, or sucking in the bells of flowers with the bee; or the little bower-women of Titania, driving the spiders from the couch of the Queen! Dryden truly said, that

> "Shakspeare's magic could not copied be;
> Within that circle none durst walk but he."

It would have been well if he had not himself dared to step within the enchanted line, and drawn on himself a fate similar to that which, according to the old superstition, punished such presumptuous interference. The following lines are parts of the song of his fairies:—

> "Merry, merry, merry, we sail from the East,
> Half-tippled at a rainbow feast.
> In the bright moonshine, while winds whistle loud,
> Tivy, tivy, tivy, we mount and we fly,
> All racking along in a downy white cloud;
> And lest our leap from the sky prove too far,
> We slide on the back of a new falling star,
> And drop from above
> In a jelly of love."

These are very favourable instances. Those who wish for a bad one may read the dying speeches of Maximin, and may compare them with the last scenes of Othello and Lear.

If Dryden had died before the expiration of the first of the periods into which we have divided his literary life, he would have left a reputation, at best, little higher than that of Lee or Davenant. He would have been known only to men of letters; and by them he would have been mentioned as a writer who threw away, on subjects which he was incompetent to treat, powers which, judiciously employed, might have raised him to eminence; whose diction and whose numbers had sometimes very high merit, but all whose works were blemished by a false taste, and by errors of gross negligence. A few of his prologues and epilogues might perhaps still have been remembered and quoted. In these little pieces he early showed all the powers which afterwards rendered him the greatest of modern satirists. But, during the latter part of his life, he gradually abandoned the drama. His plays appeared at longer intervals. He renounced rhyme in tragedy. His language became less turgid—his characters less exaggerated. He did not indeed produce correct representations of human nature; but he ceased to daub such monstrous chimeras as those which abound in his earlier pieces. Here and there passages occur worthy of the best ages of the British stage. The style which the drama requires changes with every change of character and situation. He who can vary his manner to suit the variation is the great dramatist; but he who excels in one manner only will, when that manner happens to be appropriate, appear to be a great dramatist; as the hands of a watch which does not go point right once in the twelve hours. Sometimes there is a scene of solemn debate. This a mere rhetorician may write as well as the greatest tragedian that ever lived. We confess that to us the speech of Sempronius in Cato seems very nearly as good as Shakspeare could have made it. But when the senate breaks up, and we find that the lovers and their mistresses, the hero, the villain, and the deputy-villain, all continue to harangue in the same style, we perceive the difference between a man who can write a play and a man who can write a speech. In the same manner, wit, a talent for description, or a talent for narration, may, for a time, pass for dramatic genius. Dryden was an incomparable reasoner in verse. He was conscious of his power; he was proud of it; and the authors of the Rehearsal justly charged him with abusing it. His warriors and princesses are fond of discussing points of amorous casuistry, such as would have delighted a Parliament of Love. They frequently go still deeper, and speculate on philosophical necessity and the origin of evil.

There were, however, some occasions which absolutely required this peculiar talent. Then Dryden was indeed at home. All his best scenes are of this description. They are all between men; for the heroes of Dryden, like many other gentlemen, can never talk sense when ladies are in company. They are all intended to exhibit the empire of reason over violent passion. We have two interlocutors, the one eager and impassioned, the other high, cool, and judicious. The composed and rational character gradually acquires the ascendency. His fierce companion is first inflamed to rage by his reproaches, then overawed by his equanimity, convinced by his arguments, and soothed by his persuasions. This is the case in the scene between Hector and Troilus, in that between Antony and Ventidius, and in that between Sebastian and Dorax. Nothing of the same kind in Shakspeare is equal to them, except the quarrel between Brutus and Cassius, which is worth them all three.

Some years before his death, Dryden altogether ceased to write for the stage. He had turned his powers in a new direction, with success the most splendid and decisive. His taste had gradually awakened his creative faculties. The first rank in poetry was beyond his reach; but he challenged and secured the most honourable place in the second. His imagination resembled the wings of an ostrich; it enabled him to run, though not to soar. When he attempted the highest flights, he became ridiculous; but, while he remained in a lower region, he outstripped all competitors.

All his natural and all his acquired powers fitted him to found a good critical school of poetry. Indeed he carried his reforms too far for his age. After his death our literature retrograded ; and a century was necessary to bring it back to the point at which he left it. The general soundness and healthfulness of his mental constitution, his information, of vast superficies, though of small volume, his wit scarcely inferior to that of the most distinguished followers of Donne, his eloquence, grave, deliberate, and commanding, could not save him from disgraceful failure as a rival of Shakspeare, but raised him far above the level of Boileau. His command of language was immense. With him died the secret of the old poetical diction of England,—the art of producing rich effects by familiar words. In the following century it was as completely lost as the Gothic method of painting glass, and was but poorly supplied by the laborious and tesselated imitations of Mason and Gray. On the other hand, he was the first writer under whose skilful management the scientific vocabulary fell into natural and pleasing verse. In this department, he succeeded as completely as his contemporary Gibbons succeeded in the similar enterprise of carving the most delicate flowers from heart of oak. The toughest and most knotty parts of language became ductile at his touch. His versification, in the same manner, while it gave the first model of that neatness and precision which the following generation esteemed so highly, exhibited at the same time, the last examples of nobleness, freedom, variety of pause, and cadence. His tragedies in rhyme, however worthless in themselves, had at least served the purpose of nonsense-verses ; they had taught him all the arts of melody which the heroic couplet admits. For bombast, his prevailing vice, his new subjects gave little opportunity ; his better taste gradually discarded it.

He possessed, as we have said, in a pre-eminent degree the power of reasoning in verse ; and this power was now peculiarly useful to him. His logic is by no means uniformly sound. On points of criticism, he always reasons ingeniously ; and when he is disposed to be honest, correctly. But the theological and political questions which he undertook to treat in verse were precisely those which he understood least. His arguments, therefore, are often worthless. But the manner in which they are stated is beyond all praise. The style is transparent. The topics follow each other in the happiest order. The objections are drawn up in such a manner that the whole fire of the reply may be brought to bear on them. The circumlocutions which are substituted for technical phrases are clear, neat, and exact. The illustrations at once adorn and elucidate the reasoning. The sparkling epigrams of Cowley, and the simple garrulity of the burlesque poets of Italy, are alternately employed, in the happiest manner, to give effect to what is obvious or clearness to what is obscure.

His literary creed was catholic, even to latitudinarianism ; not from any want of acuteness, but from a disposition to be easily satisfied. He was quick to discern the smallest glimpse of merit ; he was indulgent even to gross improprieties, when accompanied by any redeeming talent. When he said a severe thing, it was to serve a temporary purpose,—to support an argument, or to tease a rival. Never was so able a critic so free from fastidiousness. He loved the old poets, especially Shakspeare. He admired the ingenuity which Donne and Cowley had so wildly abused. He did justice, amidst the general silence, to the memory of Milton. He praised to the skies the school-boy lines of Addison. Always looking on the fair side of every object, he admired extravagance on account of the invention which he supposed it to indicate ; he excused affectation in favour of wit; he tolerated even tameness for the sake of the correctness which was its concomitant.

It was probably to this turn of mind, rather than to the more disgraceful causes which Johnson has assigned, that we are to attribute the exaggeration which disfigures the panegyrics of Dryden. No writer, it must be owned, has carried the flattery of dedication to a greater length. But this was not, we suspect, merely interested servility: it was the overflowing of a mind singularly disposed to admiration,—of a mind which diminished vices, and magnified virtues and obligations. The most adulatory of his addresses is that in which he dedicates the State of Innocence to Mary of Modena. Johnson thinks it strange that any man should use such language without self-detestation. But he has not remarked that to the very same work is prefixed an eulogium on Milton, which certainly could not have been acceptable at the Court of Charles the Second. Many years later, when Whig principles were in a great measure triumphant, Sprat refused to admit a monument of John Phillips into Westminster Abbey—because, in the epitaph, the name of Milton incidentally occurred. The walls of his church, he declared, should not be polluted by the name of a republican! Dryden was attached, both by principle and interest, to the Court. But nothing could deaden his sensibility to excellence. We are unwilling to accuse him severely, because the same disposition, which prompted him to pay so generous a tribute to the memory of a poet whom his patrons detested, hurried him into extravagance when he described a princess distinguished by the splendour of her beauty and the graciousness of her manners.

This is an amiable temper; but it is not the temper of great men. Where there is elevation of character, there will be fastidiousness. It is only in novels and on tombstones that we meet with people who are indulgent to the faults of others, and unmerciful to their own; and Dryden, at all events, was not one of these paragons. His charity was extended most liberally to others; but it certainly began at home. In taste he was by no means deficient. His critical works are, beyond all comparison, superior to any which had, till then, appeared in England. They were generally intended as apologies for his own poems, rather than as expositions of general principles; he, therefore, often attempts to deceive the reader by sophistry which could scarcely have deceived himself. His dicta are the dicta, not of a judge, but of an advocate:—often of an advocate in an unsound cause. Yet, in the very act of misrepresenting the laws of composition, he shows how well he understands them. But he was perpetually acting against his better knowledge. His sins were sins against light. He trusted that what was bad would be pardoned for the sake of what was good. What was good, he took no pains to make better. He was not, like most persons who rise to eminence, dissatisfied even with his best productions. He had set up no unattainable standard of perfection, the contemplation of which might at once improve and mortify him. His path was not attended by an unapproachable mirage of excellence, for ever receding, and for ever pursued. He was not disgusted by the negligence of others; and he extended the same toleration to himself. His mind was of a slovenly character,—fond of splendour, but indifferent to neatness. Hence most of his writings exhibit the sluttish magnificence of a Russian noble, all vermin and diamonds, dirty linen and inestimable sables. Those faults which spring from affectation, time and thought in a great measure removed from his poems. But his carelessness he retained to the last.

If towards the close of his life he less frequently went wrong from negligence, it was only because long habits of composition rendered it more easy to go right. In his best pieces we find false rhymes,—triplets, in which the third line appears to be a mere intruder, and, while it breaks the music, adds nothing to the meaning,—gigantic Alexandrines of fourteen and sixteen syllables, and truncated verses for which he never troubled himself to find a termination or a partner.

Such are the beauties and the faults which may be found in profusion throughout the later works of Dryden. A more just and complete estimate of his natural and acquired powers,—of the merits of his style and of its blemishes,—may be formed from the Hind and Panther, than from any of his other writings. As a didactic poem, it is far superior to the Religio Laici. The satirical parts, particularly the character of Burnet, are scarcely inferior to the best passages in Absalom and Achitophel. There are, moreover, occasional touches of a tenderness which affects us more, because it is decent, rational, and manly, and reminds us of the best scenes in his tragedies. His versification sinks and swells in happy unison with the subject; and his wealth of language seems to be unlimited. Yet, the carelessness with which he has constructed his plot, and the innumerable inconsistencies into which he is every moment falling, detract much from the pleasure which such various excellence affords.

In Absalom and Achitophel he hit upon a new and rich vein, which he worked with signal success. The ancient satirists were the subjects of a despotic government. They were compelled to abstain from political topics, and to confine their attention to the frailties of private life. They might, indeed, sometimes venture to take liberties with public men,

> "Quorum Flaminia tegitur cinis atque Latina."

Thus Juvenal immortalised the obsequious senators who met to decide the fate of the memorable turbot. His fourth satire frequently reminds us of the great political poem of Dryden; but it was not written till Domitian had fallen: and it wants something of the peculiar flavour which belongs to contemporary invective alone. His anger has stood so long that, though the body is not impaired, the effervescence, the first cream, is gone. Boileau lay under similar restraints; and, if he had been free from all restraints, would have been no match for our countryman.

The advantages which Dryden derived from the nature of his subject he improved to the very utmost. His manner is almost perfect. The style of Horace and Boileau is fit only for light subjects. The Frenchman did indeed attempt to turn the theological reasonings of the Provincial Letters into verse, but with very indifferent success. The glitter of Pope is gold. The ardour of Persius is without brilliancy. Magnificent versification and ingenious combinations rarely harmonise with the expression of deep feeling. In Juvenal and Dryden alone we have the sparkle and the heat together. Those great satirists succeeded in communicating the fervour of their feelings to materials the most incombustible, and kindled the whole mass into a blaze, at once dazzling and destructive. We cannot, indeed, think, without regret, of the part which so eminent a writer as Dryden took in the disputes of that period. There was, no doubt, madness and wickedness on both sides. But there was liberty on the one, and despotism on the other. On this point, however, we will not dwell. At Talavera the English and French troops for a moment suspended their conflict, to drink of a stream which flowed between them. The shells were passed across from enemy to enemy without apprehension or molestation. We, in the same manner, would rather assist our political adversaries to drink with us of that fountain of intellectual pleasure, which should be the common refreshment of both parties, than disturb and pollute it with the havoc of unseasonable hostilities.

Macflecnoe is inferior to Absalom and Achitophel only in the subject. In the execution it is even superior. But the greatest work of Dryden was the last, the Ode on Saint Cecilia's Day. It is the masterpiece of the second class of poetry, and ranks but just below the great models of the first. It reminds us of the Pedasus of Achilles—

> ὃς, καὶ θνητὸς ἐὼν, ἕπεθ' ἵπποις ἀθανάτοισι.

By comparing it with the impotent ravings of the heroic tragedies we may measure the progress which the mind of Dryden had made. He had learned to avoid a too audacious competition with higher natures, to keep at a distance from the verge of bombast or nonsense, to venture on no expression which did not convey a distinct idea to his own mind. There is none of that "darkness visible" of style which he had formerly affected, and in which the greatest poets only can succeed. Everything is definite, significant, and picturesque. His early writings resembled the gigantic works of those Chinese gardeners who attempt to rival nature herself, to form cataracts of terrific height and sound, to raise precipitous ridges of mountains, and to imitate in artificial plantations the vastness and the gloom of some primeval forest. This manner he abandoned; nor did he ever adopt the Dutch taste which Pope affected, the trim parterres, and the rectangular walks. He rather resembled our Kents and Browns, who imitating the great features of landscape without emulating them, consulting the genius of the place, assisting nature and carefully disguising their art, produced, not a Chamouni or a Niagara, but a Stowe or a Hagley.

We are, on the whole, inclined to regret that Dryden did not accomplish his purpose of writing an epic poem. It certainly would not have been a work of the highest rank. It would not have rivalled the Iliad, the Odyssey, or the Paradise Lost.; but it would have been superior to the productions of Apollonius, Lucan, or Statius, and not inferior to the Jerusalem Delivered. It would probably have been a vigorous narrative, animated with something of the spirit of the old romances, enriched with much splendid description, and interspersed with fine declamations and disquisitions. The danger of Dryden would have been from aiming too high; from dwelling too much, for example, on his angels of kingdoms, and attempting a competition with that great writer who in his own time had so incomparably succeeded in representing to us the sights and sounds of another world. To Milton, and to Milton alone, belonged the secrets of the great deep, the beach of sulphur, the ocean of fire, the palaces of the fallen dominations, glimmering through the everlasting shade, the silent wilderness of verdure and fragrance where armed angels kept watch over the sleep of the first lovers, the portico of diamond, the sea of jasper, the sapphire pavement empurpled with celestial roses, and the infinite ranks of the Cherubim, blazing with adamant and gold. The council, the tournament, the procession, the crowded cathedral, the camp, the guard-room, the chase, were the proper scenes for Dryden.

But we have not space to pass in review all the works which Dryden wrote. We, therefore, will not speculate longer on those which he might possibly have written. He may, on the whole, be pronounced to have been a man possessed of splendid talents, which he often abused, and of a sound judgment, the admonitions of which he often neglected ; a man who succeeded only in an inferior department of his art, but who, in that department, succeeded pre-eminently ; and who with a more independent spirit, a more anxious desire of excellence, and more respect for himself, would, in his own walk, have attained to absolute perfection.

HISTORY.

(MAY 1828.)

The Romance of History. England. By HENRY NEELE. London, 1828.

To write history respectably—that is, to abbreviate despatches, and make extracts from speeches, to intersperse in due proportion epithets of praise and abhorrence, to draw up antithetical characters of great men, setting forth how many contradictory virtues and vices they united, and abounding in *withs* and *withouts*—all this is very easy. But to be a really great historian is perhaps the rarest of intellectual distinctions. Many scientific works are, in their kind, absolutely perfect. There are poems which we should be inclined to designate as faultless, or as disfigured only by blemishes which pass unnoticed in the general blaze of excellence. There are speeches, some speeches of Demosthenes particularly, in which it would be impossible to alter a word without altering it for the worse. But we are acquainted with no history which approaches to our notion of what a history ought to be—with no history which does not widely depart, either on the right hand or on the left, from the exact line.

The cause may easily be assigned. This province of literature is a debatable land. It lies on the confines of two distinct territories. It is under the jurisdiction of two hostile powers; and, like other districts similarly situated, it is ill defined, ill cultivated, and ill regulated. Instead of being equally shared between its two rulers, the Reason and the Imagination, it falls alternately under the sole and absolute dominion of each. It is sometimes fiction. It is sometimes theory.

History, it has been said, is philosophy teaching by examples. Unhappily, what the philosophy gains in soundness and depth the examples generally lose in vividness. A perfect historian must possess an imagination sufficiently powerful to make his narrative affecting and picturesque. Yet he must control it so absolutely as to content himself with the materials which he finds, and to refrain from supplying deficiencies by additions of his own. He must be a profound and ingenious reasoner. Yet he must possess sufficient self-command to abstain from casting his facts in the mould of his hypothesis. Those who can justly estimate these almost insuperable difficulties will not think it strange that every writer should have failed, either in the narrative or in the speculative department of history.

It may be laid down as a general rule, though subject to considerable qualifications and exceptions, that history begins in novel and ends in essay. Of the romantic historians Herodotus is the earliest and the best. His animation, his simple-hearted tenderness, his wonderful talent for description and dialogue, and the pure sweet flow of his language, place him at the head of narrators. He reminds us of a delightful child. There is a grace beyond the reach of affectation in his awkwardness, a malice in his innocence, an intelligence in his nonsense, an insinuating eloquence in his lisp. We know of no writer who makes such interest for himself and his book in the heart of the reader. At the distance of three-and-twenty centuries, we feel for him the same sort of pitying fondness which Fontaine and Gay are said to have inspired in society. He has written an incomparable book. He has written something better perhaps than the best history; but he has not written a good history; he is, from the first to the last chapter, an inventor. We do not here refer merely to those gross fictions with which he has been reproached by the critics of later times. We speak of that colouring which is equally diffused over his whole narrative, and which perpetually leaves the most sagacious reader in doubt what to reject and what to receive. The most authentic parts of his work bear the same relation to his wildest legends which Henry the Fifth bears to the Tempest. There was an expedition undertaken by Xerxes against Greece; and there was an invasion of France. There was a battle at Platæa; and there was a battle at Agincourt. Cambridge and Exeter, the Constable and the Dauphin, were persons as real as Demaratus and Pausanias. The harangue of the Archbishop on the Salic Law and the Book of Numbers differs much less from the orations which have in all ages proceeded from the right reverend bench than the speeches of Mardonius and Artabanus from those which were delivered at the council-board of Susa. Shakspeare gives us enumerations of armies, and returns of killed and wounded, which are not, we suspect, much less accurate than those of Herodotus. There are passages in Herodotus nearly as long as acts of Shakspeare, in which everything is told dramatically, and in which the narrative serves only the purpose of stage-directions. It is possible, no doubt, that the substance of some real conversations may have been reported to the historian. But events which, if they ever happened, happened in ages and nations so remote that the particulars could never have been known to him, are related with the greatest minuteness of detail. We have all that Candaules said to Gyges, and all that passed between Astyages and Harpagus. We are, therefore, unable to judge whether, in the account which he gives of transactions respecting which he might possibly have been well informed, we can trust to anything beyond the naked outline; whether, for example, the answer of Gelon to the ambassadors of the Grecian confederacy, or the expressions which passed between Aristides and Themistocles at their famous interview, have been correctly transmitted to us. The great events are, no doubt, faithfully related. So, probably, are many of the slighter circumstances; but which of them it is impossible to ascertain. The fictions are so much like the facts, and the facts so much like the fictions, that, with respect to many most interesting particulars, our belief is neither given nor withheld, but remains in an uneasy and interminable state of abeyance. We know that there is truth; but we cannot exactly decide where it lies.

The faults of Herodotus are the faults of a simple and imaginative mind. Children and servants are remarkably Herodotean in their style of narration. They tell everything dramatically. Their *says hes* and *says shes* are proverbial. Every person who has had to settle their disputes knows that, even when they have no intention to deceive, their reports of conversation always require to be carefully sifted. If an educated man were giving an account of the late change of administration, he would say—"Lord Goderich resigned; and the King, in consequence, sent for the Duke of Wellington." A porter tells the story as if he had been hid behind the curtains of the royal bed at Windsor: "So Lord Goderich says, 'I cannot manage this business; I must go out.' So the King says,—says he, 'Well, then, I must send for the Duke of Wellington—that 's all.'" This is in the very manner of the father of history.

Herodotus wrote as it was natural that he should write. He wrote for a nation susceptible, curious, lively, insatiably desirous of novelty and excitement; for a nation in which the fine arts had attained their highest excellence, but in which philosophy was still in its infancy. His countrymen had but recently begun to cultivate prose composition. Public transactions had generally been recorded in verse. The first historians might, therefore, indulge without fear of censure in the license allowed to their predecessors the bards. Books were few. The events of former times were learned from tradition and from popular ballads; the manners of foreign countries from the reports of travellers. It is well known that the mystery which overhangs what is distant, either in space or time, frequently prevents us from censuring as unnatural what we perceive to be impossible. We stare at a dragoon who has killed three French cuirassiers, as a prodigy; yet we read, without the least disgust, how Godfrey slew his thousands, and Rinaldo his ten thousands. Within the last hundred years, stories about China and Bantam, which ought not to have imposed on an old nurse, were gravely laid down as foundations of political theories by eminent philosophers. What the time of the Crusades is to us, the generation of Crœsus and Solon was to the Greeks of the time of Herodotus. Babylon was to them what Pekin was to the French academicians of the last century.

For such a people was the book of Herodotus composed; and, if we may trust to a report, not sanctioned indeed by writers of high authority, but in itself not improbable, it was composed, not to be read, but to be heard. It was not to the slow circulation of a few copies, which the rich only could possess, that the aspiring author looked for his reward. The great Olympian festival,—the solemnity which collected multitudes, proud of the Grecian name, from the wildest mountains of Doris, and the remotest colonies of Italy and Libya,—was to witness his triumph. The interest of the narrative, and the beauty of the style, were aided by the imposing effect of recitation,—by the splendour of the spectacle,—by the powerful influence of sympathy. A critic who could have asked for authorities in the midst of such a scene must have been of a cold and sceptical nature; and few such critics were there. As was the historian, such were the auditors,—inquisitive, credulous, easily moved by religious awe or patriotic enthusiasm. They were the very men to hear with delight of strange beasts, and birds, and trees,—of dwarfs, and giants, and cannibals—of gods, whose very names it was impiety to utter,—of ancient dynasties, which had left behind them monuments surpassing all the works of later times,—of towns like provinces,—of rivers like seas,—of stupendous walls, and temples, and pyramids,—of the rites which the Magi performed at daybreak on the tops of the mountains,—of the secrets inscribed on the eternal obelisks of Memphis. With equal delight they would have listened to the graceful romances of their own country. They now heard of the exact accomplishment of obscure predictions, of the punishment of crimes over which the justice of heaven had seemed to slumber,—of dreams, omens, warnings from the dead,—of princesses, for whom noble suitors contended in every generous exercise of strength and skill,—of infants, strangely preserved from the dagger of the assassin, to fulfil high destinies.

As the narrative approached their own times, the interest became still more absorbing. The chronicler had now to tell the story of that great conflict from which Europe dates its intellectual and political supremacy,—a story which, even at this distance of time, is the most marvellous and the most touching in the annals of the human race,—a story abounding with all that is wild and wonderful, with all that is pathetic and animating; with the gigantic caprices of infinite wealth and despotic power—with the mightier miracles of wisdom, of virtue, and of courage. He told them of rivers dried up in a day,—of provinces famished for a meal,—of a passage for ships hewn through the mountains,—of a road for armies spread upon the waves,—of monarchies and commonwealths swept away,—of anxiety, of terror, of confusion, of despair!—and then of proud and stubborn hearts tried in that extremity of evil, and not found wanting,—of resistance long maintained against desperate odds,—of lives dearly sold, when resistance could be maintained no more,—of signal deliverance, and of unsparing revenge. Whatever gave a stronger air of reality to a narrative so well calculated to inflame the passions, and to flatter national pride, was certain to be favourably received.

Between the time at which Herodotus is said to have composed his history, and the close of the Peloponnesian war, about forty years elapsed,—forty years, crowded with great military and political events. The circumstances of that period produced a great effect on the Grecian character; and nowhere was this effect so remarkable as in the illustrious democracy of Athens. An Athenian, indeed, even in the time of Herodotus, would scarcely have written a book so romantic and garrulous as that of Herodotus. As civilisation advanced, the citizens of that famous republic became still less visionary, and still less simple-hearted. They aspired to know where their ancestors had been content to doubt; they began to doubt where their ancestors had thought it their duty to believe. Aristophanes is fond of alluding to this change in the temper of his countrymen. The father and son, in the Clouds, are evidently representatives of the generations to which they respectively belonged. Nothing more clearly illustrates the nature of this moral revolution than the change which passed upon tragedy. The wild sublimity of Æschylus became the scoff of every young Phidippides. Lectures on abstruse points of philosophy, the fine distinctions of casuistry, and the dazzling fence of rhetoric, were substituted for poetry. The language lost something of that infantine sweetness which had characterised it. It became less like the ancient Tuscan, and more like the modern French.

The fashionable logic of the Greeks was, indeed, far from strict. Logic never can be strict where books are scarce, and where information is conveyed orally. We are all aware how frequently fallacies, which, when set down on paper, are at once detected, pass for unanswerable arguments when dexterously and volubly urged in Parliament, at the bar, or in private conversation. The reason is evident. We cannot inspect them closely enough to perceive their inaccuracy. We cannot readily compare them with each other. We lose sight of one part of the subject before another, which ought to be received in connection with it, comes before us; and as there is no immutable record of what has been admitted and of what has been denied, direct contradictions pass muster with little difficulty. Almost all the education of a Greek consisted in talking and listening. His opinions on government were picked up in the debates of the assembly. If he wished to study metaphysics, instead of shutting himself up with a book, he walked down to the market-place to look for a sophist. So completely were men formed to these habits, that even writing acquired a conversational air. The philosophers adopted the form of dialogue, as the most natural mode of communicating knowledge. Their reasonings have the merits and the defects which belong to that species of composition, and are characterised rather by quickness and subtilty than by depth and precision. Truth is exhibited in parts, and by glimpses. Innumerable clever hints are given; but no sound and durable system is erected. The *argumentum ad hominem*, a kind of argument most efficacious in debate, but utterly useless for the investigation of general principles, is among their favourite resources. Hence, though nothing can be more admirable than the skill which Socrates displays in the conversations which Plato has reported or invented, his victories, for the most part, seem to us unprofitable. A trophy is set up; but no new province is added to the dominions of the human mind.

Still, where thousands of keen and ready intellects were constantly employed in speculating on the qualities of actions and on the principles of government, it was impossible that history should retain its whole character. It became less gossiping and less picturesque; but much more accurate, and somewhat more scientific.

The history of Thucydides differs from that of Herodotus as a portrait differs from the representation of an imaginary scene; as the Burke or Fox of Reynolds differs from his Ugolino or his Beaufort. In the former case, the archetype is given: in the latter it is created. The faculties which are required for the latter purpose are of a higher and rarer order than those which suffice for the former, and indeed necessarily comprise them. He who is able to paint what he sees with the eye of the mind will surely be able to paint what he sees with the eye of the body. He who can invent a story, and tell it well, will also be able to tell, in an interesting manner, a story which he has not invented. If, in practice, some of the best writers of fiction have been among the worst writers of history, it has been because one of their talents had merged in another so completely that it could not be severed; because, having long been habituated to invent and narrate at the same time, they found it impossible to narrate without inventing.

Some capricious and discontented artists have affected to consider portrait-painting as unworthy of a man of genius. Some critics have spoken in the same contemptuous manner of history. Johnson puts the case thus: The historian tells either what is false or what is true: in the former case he is no historian: in the latter he has no opportunity for displaying his abilities: for truth is one: and all who tell the truth must tell it alike.

It is not difficult to elude both the horns of this dilemma. We will recur to the analogous art of portrait-painting. Any man with eyes and hands may be taught to take a likeness. The process, up to a certain point, is merely mechanical. If this were all, a man of talents might justly despise the occupation. But we could mention portraits which are resemblances,—but not mere resemblances; faithful,—but much more than faithful; portraits which condense into one point of time, and exhibit, at a single glance, the whole history of turbid and eventful lives —in which the eye seems to scrutinise us, and the mouth to command us—in which the brow menaces, and the lip almost quivers with scorn— in which every wrinkle is a comment on some important transaction. The account which Thucydides has given of the retreat from Syracuse is, among narratives, what Vandyke's Lord Strafford is among paintings.

Diversity, it is said, implies error: truth is one, and admits of no degrees. We answer, that this principle holds good only in abstract reasonings. When we talk of the truth of imitation in the fine arts, we mean an imperfect and a graduated truth. No picture is exactly like the original; nor is a picture good in proportion as it is like the original. When Sir Thomas Lawrence paints a handsome peeress, he does not contemplate her through a powerful microscope, and transfer to the canvas the pores of the skin, the blood-vessels of the eye, and all the other beauties which Gulliver discovered in the Brobdignaggian maids of honour. If he were to do this, the effect would not merely be unpleasant, but, unless the scale of the picture were proportionably enlarged, would be absolutely *false*. And, after all, a microscope of greater power than that which he had employed would convict him of innumerable omissions. The same may be said of history. Perfectly and absolutely true it cannot be: for, to be perfectly and absolutely true, it ought to record *all* the slightest particulars of the slightest transactions—all the things done and all the words uttered during the time of which it treats. The omission of any circumstance, however insignificant, would be a defect. If history were written thus, the Bodleian Library would not contain the occurrences of a week. What is told in the fullest and most accurate annals bears an infinitely small proportion to what is suppressed. The difference between the copious work of Clarendon and the account of the civil wars in the abridgment of Goldsmith vanishes when compared with the immense mass of facts respecting which both are equally silent.

No picture, then, and no history, can present us with the whole truth: but those are the best pictures and the best histories which exhibit such parts of the truth as most nearly produce the effect of the whole. He who is deficient in the art of selection may, by showing nothing but the truth, produce all the effect of the grossest falsehood. It perpetually happens that one writer tells less truth than another, merely because he tells more truths. In the imitative arts we constantly see this. There are lines in the human face, and objects in landscape, which stand in such relations to each other, that they ought either to be all introduced into a painting together or all omitted together. A sketch into which none of them enters may be excellent; but, if some are given and others left out, though there are more points of likeness, there is less likeness. An outline scrawled with a pen, which seizes the marked features of a countenance, will give a much stronger idea of it than a bad painting in oils. Yet the worst painting in oils that ever hung at Somerset House resembles the original in many more particulars. A bust of white marble may give an excellent idea of a blooming face. Colour the lips and cheeks of the bust, leaving the hair and eyes unaltered, and the similarity, instead of being more striking, will be less so.

History has its foreground and its background: and it is principally in the management of its perspective that one artist differs from another. Some events must be represented on a large scale, others diminished; the great majority will be lost in the dimness of the horizon; and a general idea of their joint effect will be given by a few slight touches.

In this respect no writer has ever equalled Thucydides. He was a perfect master of the art of gradual diminution. His history is sometimes as concise as a chronological chart; yet it is always perspicuous. It is sometimes as minute as one of Lovelace's letters; yet it is never prolix. He never fails to contract and to expand it in the right place.

Thucydides borrowed from Herodotus the practice of putting speeches of his own into the mouths of his characters. In Herodotus this usage is scarcely censurable. It is of a piece with his whole manner. But it is altogether incongruous in the work of his successor, and violates, not only the accuracy of history, but the decencies of fiction. When once we enter into the spirit of Herodotus, we find no inconsistency. The conventional probability of his drama is preserved from the beginning to the end. The deliberate orations, and the familiar dialogues, are in strict keeping with each other. But the speeches of Thucydides are neither preceded nor followed by anything with which they harmonise. They give to the whole book something of the grotesque character of those Chinese pleasure-grounds in which perpendicular rocks of granite start up in the midst of a soft green plain. Invention is shocking where truth is in such close juxtaposition with it.

Thucydides honestly tells us that some of these discourses are purely fictitious. He may have reported the substance of others correctly, but it is clear from the internal evidence that he has preserved no more than the substance. His own peculiar habits of thought and expression are everywhere discernible. Individual and national peculiarities are seldom to be traced in the sentiments, and never in the diction. The oratory of the Corinthians and Thebans is not less Attic, either in matter or in manner, than that of the Athenians. The style of Cleon is as pure, as austere, as terse, and as significant, as that of Pericles.

In spite of this great fault, it must be allowed that Thucydides has surpassed all his rivals in the art of historical narration, in the art of producing an effect on the imagination, by skilful selection and disposition, without indulging in the license of invention. But narration, though an important part of the business of a historian, is not the whole. To append a moral to a work of fiction is either useless or superfluous. A fiction may give a more impressive effect to what is already known; but it can teach nothing new. If it presents to us characters and trains of events to which our experience furnishes us with nothing similar, instead of deriving instruction from it, we pronounce it unnatural. We do not form our opinions from it; but we try it by our preconceived opinions. Fiction, therefore, is essentially imitative. Its merit consists in its resemblance to a model with which we are already familiar, or to which at least we can instantly refer. Hence it is that the anecdotes which interest us most strongly in authentic narrative are offensive when introduced into novels; that what is called the romantic part of history is in fact the least romantic. It is delightful as history, because it contradicts our previous notions of human nature, and of the connection of causes and effects. It is, on that very account, shocking and incongruous in fiction. In fiction, the principles are given, to find the facts: in history, the facts are given, to find the principles; and the writer who does not explain the phenomena as well as state them, performs only one half of his office. Facts are the mere dross of history. It is from the abstract truth which interpenetrates them, and lies latent among them like gold in the ore, that the mass derives its whole value: and the precious particles are generally combined with the baser in such a manner that the separation is a task of the utmost difficulty.

Here Thucydides is deficient: the deficiency, indeed, is not discreditable to him. It was the inevitable effect of circumstances. It was in the nature of things necessary that, in some part of its progress through political science, the human mind should reach that point which it attained in his time. Knowledge advances by steps, and not by leaps. The axioms of an English debating club would have been startling and mysterious paradoxes to the most enlightened statesmen of Athens. But it would be as absurd to speak contemptuously of the Athenian on this account as to ridicule Strabo for not having given us an account of Chili, or to talk of Ptolemy as we talk of Sir Richard Phillips. Still, when we wish for solid geographical information, we must prefer the solemn coxcombry of Pinkerton to the noble work of Strabo. If we wanted instruction respecting the solar system, we should consult the silliest girl from a boarding-school, rather than Ptolemy.

Thucydides was undoubtedly a sagacious and reflecting man. This clearly appears from the ability with which he discusses practical questions. But the talent of deciding on the circumstances of a particular case is often possessed in the highest perfection by persons destitute of the power of generalisation. Men skilled in the military tactics of civilised nations have been amazed at the far-sightedness and penetration which a Mohawk displays in concerting his stratagems, or in discerning those of his enemies. In England, no class possesses so much of that peculiar ability which is required for constructing ingenious schemes, and for obviating remote difficulties, as the thieves and the thief-takers. Women have more of this dexterity than men. Lawyers have more of it than statesmen : statesmen have more of it than philosophers. Monk had more of it than Harrington and all his club. Walpole had more it than Adam Smith or Beccaria. Indeed, the species of discipline by which this dexterity is acquired tends to contract the mind, and to render it incapable of abstract reasoning.

The Grecian statesmen of the age of Thucydides were distinguished by their practical sagacity, their insight into motives, their skill in devising means for the attainment of their ends. A state of society in which the rich were constantly planning the oppression of the poor, and the poor the spoliation of the rich, in which the ties of party had superseded those of country, in which revolutions and counter-revolutions were events of daily occurrence, was naturally prolific in desperate and crafty political adventurers. This was the very school in which men were likely to acquire the dissimulation of Mazarin, the judicious temerity of Richelieu, the penetration, the exquisite tact, the almost instinctive presentiment of approaching events which gave so much authority to the counsel of Shaftesbury, that "it was as if a man had inquired of the oracle of God." In this school Thucydides studied ; and his wisdom is that which such a school would naturally afford. He judges better of circumstances than of principles. The more a question is narrowed, the better he reasons upon it. His work suggests many most important considerations respecting the first principles of government and morals, the growth of factions, the organisation of armies, and the mutual relations of communities. Yet all his general observations on these subjects are very superficial. His most judicious remarks differ from the remarks of a really philosophical historian, as a sum correctly cast up by a bookkeeper from a general expression discovered by an algebraist. The former is useful only in a single transaction ; the latter may be applied to an infinite number of cases.

This opinion will, we fear, be considered as heterodox. For, not to speak of the illusion which the sight of a Greek type, or the sound of a Greek diphthong, often produces, there are some peculiarities in the manner of Thucydides which in no small degree have tended to secure to him the reputation of profundity. His book is evidently the book of a man and a statesman ; and in this respect presents a remarkable contrast to the delightful childishness of Herodotus. Throughout it there is an air of matured power, of grave and melancholy reflection, of impartiality and habitual self-command. His feelings are rarely indulged, and speedily repressed. Vulgar prejudices of every kind, and particularly vulgar superstitions, he treats with a cold and sober disdain peculiar to himself. His style is weighty, condensed, antithetical, and not unfrequently obscure. But, when we look at his political philosophy, without regard to these circumstances, we find him to have been, what indeed it would have been a miracle if he had not been, simply an Athenian of the fifth century before Christ.

Xenophon is commonly placed, but we think without much reason, in the same rank with Herodotus and Thucydides. He resembles them, indeed, in the purity and sweetness of his style ; but in spirit, he rather resembles that later school of historians whose works seem to be fables composed for a moral, and who, in their eagerness to give us warnings and examples, forget to give us men and women. The Life of Cyrus, whether we look upon it as a history or as a romance, seems to us a very wretched performance. The Expedition of the Ten Thousand, and the History of Grecian Affairs, are certainly pleasant reading ; but they indicate no great power of mind. In truth, Xenophon, though his taste was elegant, his disposition amiable, and his intercourse with the world extensive, had, we suspect, rather a weak head. Such was evidently the opinion of that extraordinary man to whom he early attached himself, and for whose memory he entertained an idolatrous veneration. He came in only for the milk with which Socrates nourished his babes in philosophy. A few saws of morality, and a few of the simplest doctrines of natural religion, were enough for the good young man. The strong meat, the bold speculations on physical and metaphysical science, were reserved for auditors of a different description. Even the lawless habits of a captain of mercenary troops could not change the tendency which the character of Xenophon early acquired. To the last, he seems to have retained a sort of heathen Puritanism. The sentiments of piety and virtue which abound in his works are those of a well-meaning man, somewhat timid and narrow-minded, devout from constitution rather than from rational conviction. He was as superstitious as Herodotus, but in a way far more offensive. The very peculiarities which charm us in an infant, the toothless mumbling, the stammering, the tottering, the helplessness, the causeless tears and laughter, are disgusting in old age. In the same manner, the absurdity which precedes a period of general intelligence is often pleasing ; that which follows it is contemptible. The nonsense of Herodotus is that of a baby. The nonsense of Xenophon is that of a dotard. His stories about dreams, omens, and prophecies, present a strange contrast to the passages in which the shrewd and incredulous Thucydides mentions the popular superstitions. It is not quite clear that Xenophon was honest in his credulity ; his fanaticism was in some degree politic. He would have made an excellent member of the Apostolic Camarilla. An alarmist by nature, an aristocrat by party, he carried to an unreasonable excess his horror of popular turbulence. The quiet atrocity of Sparta did not shock him in the same manner ; for he hated tumult more than crimes. He was desirous to find restraints which might curb the passions of the multitude ; and he absurdly fancied that he had found them in a religion without evidences or sanction, precepts or example, in a frigid system of Theophilanthropy, supported by nursery tales.

Polybius and Arrian have given us authentic accounts of facts ; and here their merit ends. They were not men of comprehensive minds ;

they had not the art of telling a story in an interesting manner. They have in consequence been thrown into the shade by writers who, though less studious of truth than themselves, understood far better the art of producing effect,—by Livy and Quintus Curtius.

Yet Polybius and Arrian deserve high praise when compared with the writers of that school of which Plutarch may be considered as the head. For the historians of this class we must confess that we entertain a peculiar aversion. They seem to have been pedants, who, though destitute of those valuable qualities which are frequently found in conjunction with pedantry, thought themselves great philosophers and great politicians. They not only mislead their readers in every page, as to particular facts, but they appear to have altogether misconceived the whole character of the times of which they write. They were inhabitants of an empire bounded by the Atlantic Ocean and the Euphrates, by the ice of Scythia and the sands of Mauritania ; composed of nations whose manners, whose languages, whose religion, whose countenances and complexions, were widely different ; governed by one mighty despotism, which had risen on the ruins of a thousand commonwealths and kingdoms. Of liberty, such as it is in small democracies, of patriotism, such as it is in small independent communities of any kind, they had, and they could have, no experimental knowledge. But they had read of men who exerted themselves in the cause of their country with an energy unknown in later times, who had violated the dearest of domestic charities, or voluntarily devoted themselves to death for the public good ; and they wondered at the degeneracy of their contemporaries. It never occurred to them that the feelings which they so greatly admired sprung from local and occasional causes ; that they will always grow up spontaneously in small societies ; and that, in large empires, though they may be forced into existence for a short time by peculiar circumstances, they cannot be general or permanent. It is impossible that any man should feel for a fortress on a remote frontier as he feels for his own house ; that he should grieve for a defeat in which ten thousand people whom he never saw have fallen as he grieves for a defeat which has half unpeopled the street in which he lives ; that he should leave his home for a military expedition in order to preserve the balance of power, as cheerfully as he would leave it to repel invaders who had begun to burn all the corn fields in his neighbourhood.

The writers of whom we speak should have considered this. They should have considered that in patriotism, such as it existed amongst the Greeks, there was nothing essentially and eternally good ; that an exclusive attachment to a particular society, though a natural, and, under certain restrictions, a most useful sentiment, implies no extraordinary attainments in wisdom or virtue ; that, where it has existed in an intense degree, it has turned states into gangs of robbers whom their mutual fidelity has rendered more dangerous, has given a character of peculiar atrocity to war, and has generated that worst of all political evils, the tyranny of nations over nations.

Enthusiastically attached to the name of liberty, these historians troubled themselves little about its definition. The Spartans, tormented by ten thousand absurd restraints, unable to please themselves in the choice of their wives, their suppers, or their company, compelled to assume a peculiar manner, and to talk in a peculiar style, gloried in their liberty. The aristocracy of Rome repeatedly made liberty a plea for cutting off the favourites of the people. In almost all the little commonwealths of antiquity, liberty was used as a pretext for measures directed against everything which makes liberty valuable, for measures which stifled discussion, corrupted the administration of justice, and discouraged the accumulation of property. The writers, whose works we are considering, confounded the sound with the substance, and the means with the end. Their imaginations were inflamed by mystery. They conceived of liberty as monks conceive of love, as cockneys conceive of the happiness and innocence of rural life, as novel-reading sempstresses conceive of Almack's and Grosvenor Square, accomplished Marquesses and handsome Colonels of the Guards. In the relation of events, and the delineation of characters, they have paid little attention to facts, to the costume of the times of which they pretend to treat, or to the general principles of human nature. They have been faithful only to their own puerile and extravagant doctrines. Generals and statesmen are metamorphosed into magnanimous coxcombs, from whose fulsome virtues we turn away with disgust. The fine sayings and exploits of their heroes remind us of the insufferable perfections of Sir Charles Grandison, and affect us with a nausea similar to that which we feel when an actor, in one of Morton's or Kotzebue's plays, lays his hand on his heart, advances to the ground-lights, and mouths a moral sentence for the edification of the gods.

These writers, men who knew not what it was to have a country, men who had never enjoyed political rights, brought into fashion an offensive cant about patriotism and zeal for freedom. What the English Puritans did for the language of Christianity, what Scuderi did for the language of love, they did for the language of public spirit. By habitual exaggeration they made it mean. By monotonous emphasis they made it feeble. They abused it till it became scarcely possible to use it with effect.

Their ordinary rules of morality are deduced from extreme cases. The common regimen which they prescribe for society is made up of those desperate remedies which only its most desperate distempers require. They look with peculiar complacency on actions which even those who approve them consider as exceptions to laws of almost universal application—which bear so close an affinity to the most atrocious crimes that, even where it may be unjust to censure them, it is unsafe to praise them. It is not strange, therefore, that some flagitious instances of perfidy and cruelty should have been passed unchallenged in such company, that grave moralists, with no personal interest at stake, should have extolled, in the highest terms, deeds of which the atrocity appalled even the infuriated factions in whose cause they were perpetrated. The part which Timoleon took in the assassination of his brother shocked many of his own partisans. The recollection of it preyed long on his own mind. But it was reserved for historians who lived some centuries later to discover that his conduct was a glorious display of virtue, and to lament that, from the frailty of human nature, a man who could perform so great an exploit could repent of it.

The writings of these men, and of their modern imitators, have produced effects which deserve some notice. The English have been so long accustomed to political speculation, and have enjoyed so large a measure of practical liberty, that such works have produced little effect on their minds. We have classical associations and great names of our own which we can confidently oppose to the most splendid of ancient times. Senate has not to our ears a sound so venerable as Parliament. We respect the Great Charter more than the laws of Solon. The Capitol and the Forum impress us with less awe than our own Westminster Hall and Westminster Abbey, the place where the great men of twenty generations have contended, the place where they sleep together! The list of warriors and statesmen by whom our constitution was founded or preserved, from De Montfort down to Fox, may well stand a comparison with the Fasti of Rome. The dying thanksgiving of Sidney is as noble as the libation which Thrasea poured to Liberating Jove: and we think with far less pleasure of Cato tearing out his entrails than of Russell saying, as he turned away from his wife, that the bitterness of death was past. Even those parts of our history over which, on some accounts, we would gladly throw a veil may be proudly opposed to those on which the moralists of antiquity loved most to dwell. The enemy of English liberty was not murdered by men whom he had pardoned and loaded with benefits. He was not stabbed in the back by those who smiled and cringed before his face. He was vanquished on fields of stricken battle; he was arraigned, sentenced, and executed in the face of heaven and earth. Our liberty is neither Greek nor Roman; but essentially English. It has a character of its own,—a character which has taken a tinge from the sentiments of the chivalrous ages, and which accords with the peculiarities of our manners and of our insular situation. It has a language, too, of its own, and a language singularly idiomatic, full of meaning to ourselves, scarcely intelligible to strangers.

Here, therefore, the effect of books such as those which we have been considering has been harmless. They have, indeed, given currency to many very erroneous opinions with respect to ancient history. They have heated the imaginations of boys. They have misled the judgment and corrupted the taste of some men of letters, such as Akenside and Sir William Jones. But on persons engaged in public affairs they have had very little influence. The foundations of our constitution were laid by men who knew nothing of the Greeks but that they denied the orthodox procession and cheated the Crusaders; and nothing of Rome, but that the Pope lived there. Those who followed, contented themselves with improving on the original plan. They found models at home and therefore they did not look for them abroad. But, when enlightened men on the Continent began to think about political reformation, having no patterns before their eyes in their domestic history, they naturally had recourse to those remains of antiquity, the study of which is considered throughout Europe as an important part of education. The historians of whom we have been speaking had been members of large communities, and subjects of absolute sovereigns. Hence it is, as we have already said, that they commit such gross errors in speaking of the little republics of antiquity. Their works were now read in the spirit in which they had been written. They were read by men placed in circumstances closely resembling their own, unacquainted with the real nature of liberty, but inclined to believe everything good which could be told respecting it. How powerfully these books impressed these speculative reformers, is well known to all who have paid any attention to the French literature of the last century. But, perhaps, the writer on whom they produced the greatest effect was Vittorio Alfieri. In some of his plays, particularly in Virginia, Timoleon, and Brutus the Younger, he has even caricatured the extravagance of his masters.

It was not strange that the blind, thus led by the blind, should stumble. The transactions of the French Revolution, in some measure, took their character from these works. Without the assistance of these works, indeed, a revolution would have taken place,—a revolution productive of much good and much evil, tremendous but shortlived, evil dearly purchased, but durable good. But it would not have been exactly such a revolution. The style, the accessories, would have been in many respects different. There would have been less of bombast in language, less of affectation in manner, less of solemn trifling and ostentatious simplicity. The acts of legislative assemblies, and the correspondence of diplomatists, would not have been disgraced by rants worthy only of a college declamation. The government of a great and polished nation would not have rendered itself ridiculous by attempting to revive the usages of a world which had long passed away, or rather of a world which had never existed except in the description of a fantastic school of writers. These second-hand imitations resembled the originals about as much as the classical feast with which the Doctor in Peregrine Pickle turned the stomachs of all his guests resembled one of the suppers of Lucullus in the Hall of Apollo.

These were mere follies. But the spirit excited by these writers produced more serious effects. The greater part of the crimes which disgraced the revolution sprung indeed from the relaxation of law, from popular ignorance, from the remembrance of past oppression, from the fear of foreign conquest, from rapacity, from ambition, from party-spirit. But many atrocious proceedings must, doubtless, be ascribed to heated imagination, to perverted principle, to a distaste for what was vulgar in morals, and a passion for what was startling and dubious. Mr Burke has touched on this subject with great felicity of expression: "The gradation of their republic," says he, "is laid in moral paradoxes. All those instances to be found in history, whether real or fabulous, of a doubtful public spirit, at which morality is perplexed, reason is staggered, and from which affrighted nature recoils, are their chosen and almost sole examples for the instruction of their youth." This evil, we believe, is to be directly ascribed to the influence of the historians whom we have mentioned, and their modern imitators.

Livy had some faults in common with these writers. But on the whole he must be considered as forming a class by himself: no historian with whom we are acquainted has shown so complete an indifference to truth. He seems to have cared only about the picturesque effect of his book, and the honour of his country. On the other hand, we do not know, in the whole range of literature, an instance of a bad thing so well done. The painting of the narrative is beyond description vivid and graceful. The abundance of interesting sentiments and splendid imagery in the speeches is almost miraculous. His mind is a soil which is never over-teemed, a fountain which never seems to trickle. It pours forth profusely; yet it gives no sign of exhaustion. It was probably to this exuberance of thought and language, always fresh, always sweet, always pure, no sooner yielded than repaired, that the critics applied that expression which has been so much discussed *lactea ubertas*.

All the merits and all the defects of Livy take a colouring from the character of his nation. He was a writer peculiarly Roman; the proud citizen of a commonwealth which had indeed lost the reality of liberty, but which still sacredly preserved its forms—in fact, the subject of an arbitrary prince, but in his own estimation one of the masters of the world, with a hundred kings below him, and only the gods above him. He, therefore, looked back on former times with feelings far different from those which were naturally entertained by his Greek contemporaries, and which at a later period became general among men of letters throughout the Roman Empire. He contemplated the past with interest and delight, not because it furnished a contrast to the present, but because it had led to the present. He recurred to it, not to lose in proud recollections the sense of national degradation, but to trace the progress of national glory. It is true that his veneration for antiquity produced on him some of the effects which it produced on those who arrived at it by a very different road. He has something of their exaggeration, something of their cant, something of their fondness for anomalies and *lusus naturæ* in morality. Yet even here we perceive a difference. They talk rapturously of patriotism and liberty in the abstract. He does not seem to think any country but Rome deserving of love; nor is it for liberty as liberty, but for liberty as a part of the Roman institutions, that he is zealous.

Of the concise and elegant accounts of the campaigns of Cæsar little can be said. They are incomparable models for military despatches. But histories they are not, and do not pretend to be.

The ancient critics placed Sallust in the same rank with Livy; and unquestionably the small portion of his works which has come down to us is calculated to give a high opinion of his talents. But his style is not very pleasant: and his most powerful work, the account of the Conspiracy of Catiline, has rather the air of a clever party pamphlet than that of a history. It abounds with strange inconsistencies, which, unexplained as they are, necessarily excite doubts as to the fairness of the narrative. It is true, that many circumstances now forgotten may have been familiar to his contemporaries, and may have rendered passages clear to them which to us appear dubious and perplexing. But a great historian should remember that he writes for distant generations, for men who will perceive the apparent contradictions, and will possess no means of reconciling them. We can only vindicate the fidelity of Sallust at the expense of his skill. But in fact all the information which we have from contemporaries respecting this famous plot is liable to the same objection, and is read by discerning men with the same incredulity. It is all on one side. No answer has reached our times. Yet on the showing of the accusers the accused seem entitled to acquittal. Catiline, we are told, intrigued with a Vestal virgin, and murdered his own son. His house was a den of gamblers and debauchees. No young man could cross his threshold without danger to his fortune and reputation. Yet this is the man with whom Cicero was willing to coalesce in a contest for the first magistracy of the republic; and whom he described, long after the fatal termination of the conspiracy, as an accomplished hypocrite, by whom he had himself been deceived, and who had acted with consummate skill the character of a good citizen and a good friend. We are told that the plot was the most wicked and desperate ever known, and, almost in the same breath, that the great body of the people, and many of the nobles, favoured it; that the richest citizens of Rome were eager for the spoliation of all property, and its highest functionaries for the destruction of all order; that Crassus, Cæsar, the Prætor Lentulus, one of the consuls of the year, one of the consuls elect, were proved or suspected to be engaged in a scheme for subverting institutions to which they owed the highest honours, and introducing universal anarchy. We are told that a government, which knew all this, suffered the conspirator, whose rank, talents, and courage rendered him most dangerous, to quit Rome without molestation. We are told that bondmen and gladiators were to be armed against the citizens. Yet we find that Catiline rejected the slaves who crowded to enlist in his army, lest, as Sallust himself expresses it, "he should seem to identify their cause with that of the citizens." Finally, we are told that the magistrate, who was universally allowed to have saved all classes of his countrymen from conflagration and massacre, rendered himself so unpopular by his conduct that a marked insult was offered to him at the expiration of his office, and a severe punishment inflicted on him shortly after.

Sallust tells us, what, indeed, the letters and speeches of Cicero sufficiently prove, that some persons consider the shocking and atrocious parts of the plot as mere inventions of the government, designed to excuse its unconstitutional measures. We must confess ourselves to be of that opinion. There was, undoubtedly, a strong party desirous to change the administration. While Pompey held the command of an army, they could not effect their purpose without preparing means for repelling force, if necessary, by force. In all this there is nothing different from the ordinary practice of Roman factions. The other charges brought against the conspirators are so inconsistent and improbable, that we give no credit whatever to them. If our readers think this scepticism unreasonable, let them turn to the contemporary accounts of the Popish plot. Let them look over the votes of Parliament, and the speeches of the king; the charges of Scroggs, and the harangues of the managers employed against Strafford. A person who should form his judgment from these pieces alone would believe that London was set on fire by the Papists, and that Sir Edmondbury Godfrey was murdered for his religion. Yet these stories are now altogether exploded. They have been abandoned by statesmen to aldermen, by aldermen to clergymen, by clergymen to old women, and by old women to Sir Harcourt Lees.

Of the Latin historians, Tacitus was certainly the greatest. His style, indeed, is not only faulty in itself, but is, in some respects, peculiarly unfit for historical composition. He carries his love of effect far beyond the limits of moderation. He tells a fine story finely, but he cannot tell a plain story plainly. He stimulates till stimulants lose their power. Thucydides, as we have already observed, relates ordinary transactions with the unpretending clearness and succinctness of a gazette. His great powers of painting he reserves for events of which the slightest details are interesting. The simplicity of the setting gives additional lustre to the brilliants. There are passages in the narrative of Tacitus superior to the best which can be quoted from Thucydides. But they are not enchased and relieved with the same skill. They are far more striking when extracted from the body of the work to which they belong than when they occur in their place, and are read in connection with what precedes and follows.

In the delineation of character, Tacitus is unrivalled among historians, and has very few superiors among dramatists and novelists. By the delineation of character, we do not mean the practice of drawing up epigrammatic catalogues of good and bad qualities, and appending them to the names of eminent men. No writer, indeed, has done this more skilfully than Tacitus; but this is not his peculiar glory. All the persons who occupy a large space in his works have an individuality of character which seems to pervade all their words and actions. We know them as if we had lived with them. Claudius, Nero, Otho, both the Agrippinas, are masterpieces. But Tiberius is a still higher miracle of art. The historian undertook to make us intimately acquainted with a man singularly dark and inscrutable,—with a man whose real disposition long remained swathed up in intricate folds of factitious virtues, and over whose actions the hypocrisy of his youth, and the seclusion of his old age, threw a singular mystery. He was to exhibit the specious qualities of the tyrant in a light which might render them transparent, and enable us at once to perceive the covering and the vices which it concealed. He was to trace the gradations by which the first magistrate of a republic, a senator mingling freely in debate, a noble associating with his brother nobles, was transformed into an Asiatic sultan ; he was to exhibit a character, distinguished by courage, self-command, and profound policy, yet defiled by all

> "th' extravagancy
> And crazy ribaldry of fancy."

He was to mark the gradual effect of advancing age and approaching death on this strange compound of strength and weakness ; to exhibit the old sovereign of the world sinking into a dotage which, though it rendered his appetites eccentric, and his temper savage, never impaired the powers of his stern and penetrating mind—conscious of failing strength, raging with capricious sensuality, yet to the last the keenest of observers, the most artful of dissemblers, and the most terrible of masters. The task was one of extreme difficulty. The execution is almost perfect.

The talent which is required to write history thus bears a considerable affinity to the talent of a great dramatist. There is one obvious distinction. The dramatist creates ; the historian only disposes. The difference is not in the mode of execution, but in the mode of conception. Shakspeare is guided by a model which exists in his imagination ; Tacitus, by a model furnished from without. Hamlet is to Tiberius what the Laocoon is to the Newton of Roubilliac.

In this part of his art Tacitus certainly had neither equal nor second among the ancient historians. Herodotus, though he wrote in a dramatic form, had little of dramatic genius. The frequent dialogues which he introduces give vivacity and movement to the narrative, but are not strikingly characteristic. Xenophon is fond of telling his readers, at considerable length, what he thought of the persons whose adventures he relates. But he does not show them the men, and enable them to judge for themselves. The heroes of Livy are the most insipid of all beings, real or imaginary, the heroes of Plutarch always excepted. Indeed, the manner of Plutarch in this respect reminds us of the cookery of those continental inns, the horror of English travellers, in which a certain nondescript broth is kept constantly boiling, and copiously poured, without distinction, over every dish as it comes up to table. Thucydides, though at a wide interval, comes next to Tacitus. His Pericles, his Nicias, his Cleon, his Brasidas, are happily discriminated. The lines are few, the colouring faint : but the general air and expression is caught.

We begin, like the priest in Don Quixote's library, to be tired with taking down books one after another for separate judgment, and feel inclined to pass sentence on them in masses. We shall therefore, instead of pointing out the defects and merits of the different modern historians, state generally in what particulars they have surpassed their predecessors, and in what we conceive them to have failed.

They have certainly been, in one sense, far more strict in their adherence to truth than most of the Greek and Roman writers. They do not think themselves entitled to render their narrative interesting by introducing descriptions, conversations, and harangues which have no existence but in their own imagination. This improvement was gradually introduced. History commenced among the modern nations of Europe, as it had commenced among the Greeks, in romance. Froissart was our Herodotus. Italy was to Europe what Athens was to Greece. In Italy, therefore, a more accurate and manly mode of narration was early introduced. Machiavelli and Guicciardini, in imitation of Livy and Thucydides, composed speeches for their historical personages. But, as the classical enthusiasm which distinguished the age of Lorenzo and Leo gradually subsided, this absurd practice was abandoned. In France, we fear, it still, in some degree, keeps its ground. In our own country, a writer who should venture on it would be laughed to scorn. Whether the historians of the last two centuries tell more truth than those of antiquity, may perhaps be doubted. But it is quite certain that they tell fewer falsehoods.

In the philosophy of history, the moderns have very far surpassed the ancients. It is not, indeed, strange that the Greeks and Romans should not have carried the science of government, or any other experimental science, so far as it has been carried in our time; for the experimental sciences are generally in a state of progression. They were better understood in the seventeenth century than in the sixteenth, and in the eighteenth century than in the seventeenth. But this constant improvement, this natural growth of knowledge, will not altogether account for the immense superiority of the modern writers. The difference is a difference not in degree, but of kind. It is not merely that new principles have been discovered, but that new faculties seem to be exerted. It is not that at one time the human intellect should have made but small progress, and at another time have advanced far: but that at one time it should have been stationary, and at another time constantly proceeding. In taste and imagination, in the graces of style, in the arts of persuasion, in the magnificence of public works, the ancients were at least our equals. They reasoned as justly as ourselves on subjects which required pure demonstration. But in the moral sciences they made scarcely any advance. During the long period which elapsed between the fifth century before the Christian era and the fifth century after it little perceptible progress was made. All the metaphysical discoveries of all the philosophers, from the time of Socrates to the northern invasion, are not to be compared in importance with those which have been made in England every fifty years since the time of Elizabeth. There is not the least reason to believe that the principles of government, legislation, and political economy, were better understood in the time of Augustus Cæsar than in the time of Pericles. In our own country, the sound doctrines of trade and jurisprudence have been, within the lifetime of a single generation, dimly hinted, boldly propounded, defended, systematised, adopted by all reflecting men of all parties, quoted in legislative assemblies, incorporated into laws and treaties.

To what is this change to be attributed? Partly, no doubt, to the discovery of printing, a discovery which has not only diffused knowledge widely, but, as we have already observed, has also introduced into reasoning a precision unknown in those ancient communities, in which information, was, for the most part, conveyed orally. There was, we suspect, another cause, less obvious, but still more powerful.

The spirit of the two most famous nations of antiquity was remarkably exclusive. In the time of Homer the Greeks had not begun to consider themselves as a distinct race. They still looked with something of childish wonder and awe on the riches and wisdom of Sidon and Egypt. From what causes, and by what gradations, their feelings underwent a change, it is not easy to determine. Their history, from the Trojan to the Persian war, is covered with an obscurity broken only by dim and scattered gleams of truth. But it is certain that a great alteration took place. They regarded themselves as a separate people. They had common religious rites, and common principles of public law, in which foreigners had no part. In all their political systems, monarchical, aristocratical, and democratical, there was a strong family likeness. After the retreat of Xerxes and the fall of Mardonius, national pride rendered the separation between the Greeks and the barbarians complete. The conquerors considered themselves men of a superior breed, men who, in their intercourse with neighbouring nations, were to teach, and not to learn. They looked for nothing out of themselves. They borrowed nothing. They translated nothing. We cannot call to mind a single expression of any Greek writer earlier than the age of Augustus, indicating an opinion that anything worth reading could be written in any language except his own. The feelings which sprung from national glory were not altogether extinguished by national degradation. They were fondly cherished through ages of slavery and shame. The literature of Rome herself was regarded with contempt by those who had fled before her arms, and who bowed beneath her fasces. Voltaire says, in one of his six thousand pamphlets, that he was the first person who told the French that England had produced eminent men besides the Duke of Marlborough. Down to a very late period, the Greeks seem to have stood in need of similar information with respect to their masters. With Paulus Æmilius, Sylla, and Cæsar, they were well acquainted. But the notions which they entertained respecting Cicero and Virgil were, probably, not unlike those which Boileau may have formed about Shakspeare. Dionysius lived in the most splendid age of Latin poetry and eloquence. He was a critic, and, after the manner of his age, an able critic. He studied the language of Rome, associated with its learned men, and compiled its history. Yet he seems to have thought its literature valuable only for the purpose of illustrating its antiquities. His reading appears to have been confined to its public records, and to a few old annalists. Once, and but once, if we remember rightly, he quotes Ennius, to solve a question of etymology. He has written much on the art of oratory: yet he has not mentioned the name of Cicero.

The Romans submitted to the pretensions of a race which they despised. Their epic poet, while he claimed for them pre-eminence in the arts of government and war, acknowledged their inferiority in taste, eloquence, and science. Men of letters affected to understand the Greek language better than their own. Pomponius preferred the honour of becoming an Athenian, by intellectual naturalisation, to all the distinctions which were to be acquired in the political contests of Rome. His great friend composed Greek poems and memoirs. It is well known that Petrarch considered that beautiful language in which his sonnets are written, as a barbarous jargon, and intrusted his fame to those wretched Latin hexameters which, during the last four centuries, have scarcely found four readers. Many eminent Romans appear to have felt the same contempt for their native tongue as compared with the Greek. The prejudice continued to a very late period. Julian was as partial to the Greek language as Frederic the Great to the French: and it seems that he could not express himself with elegance in the dialect of the state which he ruled.

Even those Latin writers who did not carry this affectation so far looked on Greece as the only fount of knowledge. From Greece they derived the measures of their poetry, and, indeed, all of poetry that can be imported. From Greece they borrowed the principles and the vocabulary of their philosophy. To the literature of other nations they do not seem to have paid the slightest attention. The sacred books of the Hebrews, for example, books which, considered merely as human compositions, are invaluable to the critic, the antiquarian, and the philosopher, seem to have been utterly unnoticed by them. The peculiarities of Judaism, and the rapid growth of Christianity, attracted their notice. They made war against the Jews. They made laws against the Christians. But they never opened the books of Moses. Juvenal quotes the Pentateuch with censure. The author of the treatise on "the Sublime" quotes it with praise: but both of them quote it erroneously. When we consider what sublime poetry, what curious history, what striking and peculiar views of the Divine nature and of the social duties of men, are to be found in the Jewish scriptures, when we consider that two sects on which the attention of the government was constantly fixed appealed to those scriptures as the rule of their faith and practice, this indifference is astonishing. The fact seems to be, that the Greeks admired only themselves, and that the Romans admired only themselves and the Greeks. Literary men turned away with disgust from modes of thought and expression so widely different from all that they had been accustomed to admire. The effect was narrowness and sameness of thought. Their minds, if we may so express ourselves, bred in and in, and were accordingly cursed with barrenness and degeneracy. No extraneous beauty or vigour was engrafted on the decaying stock. By an exclusive attention to one class of phenomena, by an exclusive taste for one species of excellence, the human intellect was stunted. Occasional coincidences were turned into general rules. Prejudices were confounded with instincts. On man, as he was found in a particular state of society—on government, as it had existed in a particular corner of the world, many just observations were made; but of man as man, or government as government, little was known. Philosophy remained stationary. Slight changes, sometimes for the worse and sometimes for the better, were made in the superstructure. But nobody thought of examining the foundations.

The vast despotism of the Cæsars, gradually effacing all national peculiarities, and assimilating the remotest provinces of the empire to each other, augmented the evil. At the close of the third century after Christ, the prospects of mankind were fearfully dreary. A system of etiquette, as pompously frivolous as that of the Escurial, had been established. A sovereign almost invisible; a crowd of dignitaries minutely distinguished by badges and titles; rhetoricians who said nothing but what had been said ten thousand times; schools in which nothing was taught but what had been known for ages: such was the machinery provided for the government and instruction of the most enlightened part of the human race. That great community was then in danger of experiencing a calamity far more terrible than any of the quick, inflammatory, destroying maladies, to which nations are liable,—a tottering, drivelling, paralytic longevity, the immortality of the Struldbrugs, a Chinese civilisation. It would be easy to indicate many points of resemblance between the subjects of Diocletian and the people of that Celestial Empire, where, during many centuries, nothing has been learned or unlearned; where government, where education, where the whole system of life, is a ceremony; where knowledge forgets to increase and multiply, and, like the talent buried in the earth, or the pound wrapped up in the napkin, experiences neither waste nor augmentation.

The torpor was broken by two great revolutions, the one moral, the other political, the one from within, the other from without. The victory of Christianity over Paganism, considered with relation to this subject only, was of great importance. It overthrew the old system of morals; and with it much of the old system of metaphysics. It furnished the orator with new topics of declamation, and the logician with new points of controversy. Above all, it introduced a new principle, of which the operation was constantly felt in every part of society. It stirred the stagnant mass from the inmost depths. It excited all the passions of a stormy democracy in the quiet and listless population of an overgrown empire. The fear of heresy did what the sense of oppression could not do; it changed men, accustomed to be turned over like sheep from tyrant to tyrant, into devoted partisans and obstinate rebels. The tones of an eloquence which had been silent for ages resounded from the pulpit of Gregory. A spirit which had been extinguished on the plains of Philippi revived in Athanasius and Ambrose.

Yet even this remedy was not sufficiently violent for the disease. It did not prevent the empire of Constantinople from relapsing, after a short paroxysm of excitement, into a state of stupefaction, to which history furnishes scarcely any parallel. We there find that a polished society, a society in which a most intricate and elaborate system of jurisprudence was established, in which the arts of luxury were well understood, in which the works of the great ancient writers were preserved and studied, existed for nearly a thousand years without making one great discovery in science, or producing one book which is read by any but curious inquirers. There were tumults, too, and controversies, and wars in abundance: and these things, bad as they are in themselves, have generally been favourable to the progress of the intellect. But here they tormented without stimulating. The waters were troubled; but no healing influence descended. The agitations resembled the grinnings and writhings of a galvanised corpse, not the struggles of an athletic man.

From this miserable state the Western Empire was saved by the fiercest and most destroying visitation with which God has ever chastened his creatures—the invasion of the Northern nations. Such a cure was required for such a distemper. The fire of London, it has been observed was a blessing. It burned down the city; but it burned out the plague. The same may be said of the tremendous devastation of the Roman dominions. It annihilated the noisome recesses in which lurked the seeds of great moral maladies; it cleared an atmosphere fatal to the health and vigour of the human mind. It cost Europe a thousand years of barbarism to escape the fate of China.

At length the terrible purification was accomplished; and the second civilisation of mankind commenced, under circumstances which afforded a strong security that it would never retrograde and never pause. Europe was now a great federal community. Her numerous states were united by the easy ties of international law and a common religion. Their institutions, their languages, their manners, their tastes in literature, their modes of education, were widely different. Their connection was close enough to allow of mutual observation and improvement, yet not so close as to destroy the idioms of national opinion and feeling.

The balance of moral and intellectual influence thus established between the nations of Europe is far more important than the balance of political power. Indeed, we are inclined to think that the latter is valuable principally because it tends to maintain the former. The civilised world has thus been preserved from a uniformity of character fatal to all improvement. Every part of it has been illuminated with light reflected from every other. Competition has produced activity where monopoly would have produced sluggishness. The number of experiments in moral science which the speculator has an opportunity of witnessing has been increased beyond all calculation. Society and human nature, instead of being seen in a single point of view, are presented to him under ten thousand different aspects. By observing the manners of surrounding nations, by studying their literature, by comparing it with that of his own country and of the ancient republics, he is enabled to correct those errors into which the most acute men must fall when they reason from a single species to a genus. He learns to distinguish what is local from what is universal : what is transitory from what is eternal ; to discriminate between exceptions and rules ; to trace the operation of disturbing causes ; to separate those general principles which are always true and everywhere applicable from the accidental circumstances with which, in every community, they are blended, and with which, in an isolated community, they are confounded by the most philosophical mind.

Hence it is that, in generalisation, the writers of modern times have far surpassed those of antiquity. The historians of our own country are unequalled in depth and precision of reason ; and, even in the works of our mere compilers, we often meet with speculations beyond the reach of Thucydides or Tacitus.

But it must, at the same time, be admitted that they have characteristic faults, so closely connected with their characteristic merits, and of such magnitude, that it may well be doubted whether, on the whole, this department of literature has gained or lost during the last two-and-twenty centuries.

The best historians of later times have been seduced from truth, not by their imagination, but by their reason. They far excel their predecessors in the art of deducing general principles from facts. But unhappily they have fallen into the error of distorting facts to suit general principles. They arrive at a theory from looking at some of the phenomena ; and the remaining phenomena they strain or curtail to suit the theory. For this purpose it is not necessary that they should assert what is absolutely false ; for all questions in morals and politics are questions of comparison and degree. Any proposition which does not involve a contradiction in terms may by possibility be true ; and, if all the circumstances which raise a probability in its favour, be stated and enforced, and those which lead to an opposite conclusion be omitted or lightly passed over, it may appear to be demonstrated. In every human character and transaction there is a mixture of good and evil : a little exaggeration, a little suppression, a judicious use of epithets, a watchful and searching scepticism with respect to the evidence on one side, a convenient credulity with respect to every report or tradition on the other, may easily make a saint of Laud, or a tyrant of Henry the Fourth.

This species of misrepresentation abounds in the most valuable works of modern historians. Herodotus tells his story like a slovenly witness, who, heated by partialities and prejudices, unacquainted with the established rules of evidence, and uninstructed as to the obligations of his oath, confounds what he imagines with what he has seen and heard, and brings out facts, reports, conjectures, and fancies, in one mass. Hume is an accomplished advocate. Without positively asserting much more than he can prove, he gives prominence to all the circumstances which support his case ; he glides lightly over those which are unfavourable to it ; his own witnesses are applauded and encouraged ; the statements which seem to throw discredit on them are controverted ; the contradictions into which they fall are explained away ; a clear and connected abstract of their evidence is given. Everything that is offered on the other side is scrutinised with the utmost severity ; every suspicious circumstance is a ground for comment and invective ; what cannot be denied is extenuated, or passed by without notice ; concessions even are sometimes made : but this insidious candour only increases the effect of the vast mass of sophistry.

We have mentioned Hume as the ablest and most popular writer of his class ; but the charge which we have brought against him is one to which all our most distinguished historians are in some degree obnoxious. Gibbon, in particular, deserves very severe censure. Of all the numerous culprits, however, none is more deeply guilty than Mr Mitford. We willingly acknowledge the obligations which are due to his talents and industry. The modern historians of Greece had been in the habit of writing as if the world had learned nothing new during the last sixteen hundred years. Instead of illustrating the events which they narrated by the philosophy of a more enlightened age, they judged of antiquity by itself alone. They seemed to think that notions, long driven from every other corner of literature, had a prescriptive right to occupy this last fastness. They considered all the ancient historians as equally authentic. They scarcely made any distinction between him who related events at which he had himself been present and him who five hundred years after composed a philosophic romance for a society which had in the interval undergone a complete change. It was all Greek, and all true ! The centuries which separated Plutarch from Thucydides seemed as nothing to men who lived in an age so remote. The distance of time produced an error similar to that which is sometimes produced by distance of place. There are many good ladies who think that all the people in India live together, and who charge a friend setting out for Calcutta with kind messages to Bombay. To Rollin and Barthelemi, in the same manner, all the classics were contemporaries.

Mr Mitford certainly introduced great improvements ; he showed us that men who wrote in Greek and Latin sometimes told lies ; he showed us that ancient history might be related in such a manner as to furnish not only allusions to schoolboys, but important lessons to statesmen. From that love of theatrical effect and high-flown sentiment which had poisoned almost every other work on the same subject his book is perfectly free. But his passion for a theory as false, and far more ungenerous, led him substantially to violate truth in every page. Statements unfavourable to democracy are made with unhesitating confidence, and with the utmost bitterness of language. Every charge brought against a monarch or an aristocracy is sifted with the utmost care. If it cannot be denied, some palliating supposition is suggested ; or we are at least reminded that some circumstances now unknown *may* have justified what at present appears unjustifiable. Two events are reported by the same author in the same sentence; their truth rests on the same testimony; but the one supports the darling hypothesis, and the other seems inconsistent with it. The one is taken and the other is left.

The practice of distorting narrative into a conformity with theory is a vice not so unfavourable as at first sight it may appear to the interests of political science. We have compared the writers who indulge in it to advocates; and we may add, that their conflicting fallacies, like those of advocates, correct each other. It has always been held, in the most enlightened nations, that a tribunal will decide a judicial question most fairly when it has heard two able men argue, as unfairly as possible, on the two opposite sides of it; and we are inclined to think that this opinion is just. Sometimes, it is true, superior eloquence and dexterity will make the worse appear the better reason; but it is at least certain that the judge will be compelled to contemplate the case under two different aspects. It is certain that no important consideration will altogether escape notice.

This is at present the state of history. The poet laureate appears for the Church of England, Lingard for the Church of Rome. Brodie has moved to set aside the verdicts obtained by Hume; and the cause in which Mitford succeeded is, we understand, about to be reheard. In the midst of these disputes, however, history proper, if we may use the term, is disappearing. The high, grave, impartial summing up of Thucydides is nowhere to be found.

While our historians are practising all the arts of controversy, they miserably neglect the art of narration, the art of interesting the affections and presenting pictures to the imagination. That a writer may produce these effects without violating truth is sufficiently proved by many excellent biographical works. The immense popularity which well-written books of this kind have acquired deserves the serious consideration of historians. Voltaire's Charles the Twelfth, Marmontel's Memoirs, Boswell's Life of Johnson, Southey's account of Nelson, are perused with delight by the most frivolous and indolent. Whenever any tolerable book of the same description makes its appearance, the circulating libraries are mobbed; the book societies are in commotion; the new novel lies uncut; the magazines and newspapers fill their columns with extracts. In the meantime histories of great empires, written by men of eminent ability, lie unread on the shelves of ostentatious libraries.

The writers of history seem to entertain an aristocratical contempt for the writers of memoirs. They think it beneath the dignity of men who describe the revolutions of nations to dwell on the details which constitute the charm of biography. They have imposed on themselves a code of conventional decencies as absurd as that which has been the bane of the French drama. The most characteristic and interesting circumstances are omitted or softened down, because, as we are told, they are too trivial for the majesty of history. The majesty of history seems to resemble the majesty of the poor King of Spain, who died a martyr to ceremony because the proper dignitaries were not at hand to render him assistance.

That history would be more amusing if this etiquette were relaxed will, we suppose, be acknowledged. But would it be less dignified or less useful? What do we mean when we say that one past event is important and another insignificant? No past event has any intrinsic importance. The knowledge of it is valuable only as it leads us to form just calculations with respect to the future. A history which does not serve this purpose, though it may be filled with battles, treaties, and commotions, is as useless as the series of turnpike tickets collected by Sir Matthew Mite.

Let us suppose that Lord Clarendon, instead of filling hundreds of folio pages with copies of state papers, in which the same assertions and contradictions are repeated till the reader is overpowered with weariness, had condescended to be the Boswell of the Long Parliament. Let us suppose that he had exhibited to us the wise and lofty self-government of Hampden, leading while he seemed to follow, and propounding unanswerable arguments in the strongest forms with the modest air of an inquirer anxious for information; the delusions which misled the noble spirit of Vane; the coarse fanaticism which concealed the yet loftier genius of Cromwell, destined to control a mutinous army and a factious people, to abase the flag of Holland, to arrest the victorious arms of Sweden, and to hold the balance firm between the rival monarchies of France and Spain. Let us suppose that he had made his Cavaliers and Roundheads talk in their own style; that he had reported some of the ribaldry of Rupert's pages, and some of the cant of Harrison and Fleetwood. Would not his work in that case have been more interesting? Would it not have been more accurate?

A history in which every particular incident may be true may on the whole be false. The circumstances which have most influence on the happiness of mankind, the changes of manners and morals, the transition of communities from poverty to wealth, from knowledge to ignorance, from ferocity to humanity—these are, for the most part, noiseless revolutions. Their progress is rarely indicated by what historians are pleased to call important events. They are not achieved by armies, or enacted by senates. They are sanctioned by no treaties, and recorded in no archives. They are carried on in every school, in every church, behind ten thousand counters, at ten thousand firesides. The upper current of society presents no certain criterion by which we can judge of the direction in which the under current flows. We read of defeats and victories. But we know that nations may be miserable amidst victories and prosperous amidst defeats. We read of the fall of wise ministers and of the rise of profligate favourites. But we must remember how small a proportion the good or evil effected by a single statesman can bear to the good or evil of a great social system.

Bishop Watson compares a geologist to a gnat mounted on an elephant, and laying down theories as to the whole internal structure of the vast animal, from the phenomena of the hide. The comparison is unjust to the geologists; but is very applicable to those historians who write as if the body politic were homogeneous, who look only on the surface of affairs, and never think of the mighty and various organisation which lies deep below.

In the works of such writers as these, England, at the close of the Seven Years' War, is in the highest state of prosperity: at the close of the American war she is in a miserable and degraded condition; as if the people were not on the whole as rich, as well governed, and as well educated at the latter period as at the former. We have read books called Histories of England, under the reign of George the Second, in which the rise of Methodism is not even mentioned. A hundred years hence this breed of authors will, we hope, be extinct. If it should still exist, the late ministerial interregnum will be described in terms which will seem to imply that all government was at an end; that the social contract was annulled; and that the hand of every man was against his neighbour, until the wisdom and virtue of the new cabinet educed order out of the chaos of anarchy. We are quite certain that misconceptions as gross prevail at this moment respecting many important parts of our annals.

The effect of historical reading is analogous, in many respects, to that produced by foreign travel. The student, like the tourist, is transported into a new state of society. He sees new fashions. He hears new modes of expression. His mind is enlarged by contemplating the wide diversities of laws, of morals, and of manners. But men may travel far, and return with minds as contracted as if they had never stirred from their own market-town. In the same manner, men may know the dates of many battles and the genealogies of many royal houses, and yet be no wiser. Most people look at past times as princes look at foreign countries. More than one illustrious stranger has landed on our island amidst the shouts of a mob, has dined with the king, has hunted with the master of the stag-hounds, has seen the guards reviewed, and a knight of the garter installed, has cantered along Regent Street, has visited Saint Paul's, and noted down its dimensions; and has then departed, thinking that he has seen England. He has, in fact, seen a few public buildings, public men, and public ceremonies. But of the vast and complex system of society, of the fine shades of national character, of the practical operation of government and laws, he knows nothing. He who would understand these things rightly must not confine his observations to palaces and solemn days. He must see ordinary men as they appear in their ordinary business and in their ordinary pleasures. He must mingle in the crowds of the exchange and the coffee-house. He must obtain admittance to the convivial table and the domestic hearth. He must bear with vulgar expressions. He must not shrink from exploring even the retreats of misery. He who wishes to understand the condition of mankind in former ages must proceed on the same principle. If he attends only to public transactions, to wars, congresses, and debates, his studies will be as unprofitable as the travels of those imperial, royal, and serene sovereigns who form their judgment of our island from having gone in state to a few fine sights, and from having held formal conferences with a few great officers.

The perfect historian is he in whose work the character and spirit of an age is exhibited in miniature. He relates no fact, he attributes no expression to his characters, which is not authenticated by sufficient testimony. But, by judicious selection, rejection, and arrangement, he gives to truth those attractions which have been usurped by fiction. In his narrative a due subordination is observed: some transactions are prominent; others retire. But the scale on which he represents them is increased or diminished, not according to the dignity of the persons concerned in them, but according to the degree in which they elucidate the condition of society and the nature of man. He shows us the court, the camp, and the senate. But he shows us also the nation. He considers no anecdote, no peculiarity of manner, no familiar saying, as too insignificant for his notice which is not too insignificant to illustrate the operation of laws, of religion, and of education, and to mark the progress of the human mind. Men will not merely be described, but will be made intimately known to us. The changes of manners will be indicated, not merely by a few general phrases or a few extracts from statistical documents, but by appropriate images presented in every line.

If a man, such as we are supposing, should write the history of England, he would assuredly not omit the battles, the sieges, the negotiations, the seditions, the ministerial changes. But with these he would intersperse the details which are the charm of historical romances. At Lincoln Cathedral there is a beautiful painted window, which was made by an apprentice out of the pieces of glass which had been rejected by his master. It is so far superior to every other in the church, that, according to the tradition, the vanquished artist killed himself from mortification. Sir Walter Scott, in the same manner, has used those fragments of truth which historians have scornfully thrown behind them in a manner which may well excite their envy. He has constructed out of their gleanings works which, even considered as histories, are scarcely less valuable than theirs. But a truly great historian would reclaim those materials which the novelist has appropriated. The history of the government, and the history of the people, would be exhibited in that mode in which alone they can be exhibited justly, in inseparable conjunction and intermixture. We should not then have to look for the wars and votes of the Puritans in Clarendon, and for their phraseology in Old Mortality; for one half of King James in Hume, and for the other half in the Fortunes of Nigel.

The early part of our imaginary history would be rich with colouring from romance, ballad, and chronicle. We should find ourselves in the company of knights such as those of Froissart, and of pilgrims such as those who rode with Chaucer from the Tabard. Society would be shown from the highest to the lowest,—from the royal cloth of state to the den of the outlaw; from the throne of the legate to the chimney-corner where the begging friar regaled himself. Palmers, minstrels, crusaders,—the stately monastery, with the good cheer in its refectory and the high-mass in its chapel,—the manor-house, with its hunting and hawking,—the tournament, with the heralds and ladies, the trumpets and the cloth of gold,—would give truth and life to the representation. We should perceive, in a thousand slight touches, the importance of the privileged burgher, and the fierce and haughty spirit which swelled under the collar of the degraded villain. The revival of letters would not merely be described in a few magnificent periods. We should discern, in innumerable particulars, the fermentation of mind, the eager appetite for knowledge, which distinguished the sixteenth from the fifteenth century. In the Reformation we should see, not merely a schism which changed the ecclesiastical constitution of England and the mutual relations of the European powers, but a moral war which raged in every family, which set the father against the son, and the son against the father, the mother against the daughter, and the daughter against the mother. Henry would be painted with the skill of Tacitus. We should have the change of his character from his profuse and joyous youth to his savage and imperious old age. We should perceive the gradual progress of selfish and tyrannical passions in a mind not naturally insensible or ungenerous; and to the last we should detect some remains of that open and noble temper which endeared him to a people whom he oppressed, struggling with the hardness of despotism and the irritability of disease. We should see Elizabeth in all her weakness and in all her strength, surrounded by the handsome favourites whom she never trusted, and the wise old statesmen whom she never dismissed, uniting in herself the most contradictory qualities of both her parents,—the coquetry, the caprice, the petty malice of Anne,—the haughty and resolute spirit of Henry. We have no hesitation in saying that a great artist might produce a portrait of this remarkable woman at least as striking as that in the novel of Kenilworth, without employing a single trait not authenticated by ample testimony. In the meantime, we should see arts cultivated, wealth accumulated, the conveniences of life improved. We should see the keeps, where nobles, insecure themselves, spread insecurity around them, gradually giving place to the halls of peaceful opulence, to the oriels of Longleat, and the stately pinnacles of Burleigh. We should see towns extended, deserts cultivated, the hamlets of fishermen turned into wealthy havens, the meal of the peasant improved, and his hut more commodiously furnished. We should see those opinions and feelings which produced the great struggle against the House of Stuart slowly growing up in the bosom of private families, before they manifested themselves in parliamentary debates. Then would come the civil war. Those skirmishes on which Clarendon dwells so minutely would be told, as Thucydides would have told them, with perspicuous conciseness. They are merely connecting links. But the great characteristics of the age, the loyal enthusiasm of the brave English gentry, the fierce licentiousness of the swearing, dicing, drunken reprobates, whose excesses disgraced the royal cause,—the austerity of the Presbyterian Sabbaths in the city, the extravagance of the independent preachers in the camp, the precise garb, the severe countenance, the petty scruples, the affected accent, the absurd names and phrases which marked the Puritans,—the valour, the policy, the public spirit, which lurked beneath these ungraceful disguises,—the dreams of the raving Fifth-monarchy-man, the dreams, scarcely less wild, of the philosophic republican, all these would enter into the representation, and render it at once more exact and more striking.

The instruction derived from history thus written would be of a vivid and practical character. It would be received by the imagination as well as by the reason. It would be not merely traced on the mind, but branded into it. Many truths, too, would be learned, which can be learned in no other manner. As the history of states is generally written, the greatest and most momentous revolutions seem to come upon them like supernatural inflictions, without warning or cause. But the fact is, that such revolutions are almost always the consequences of moral changes, which have gradually passed on the mass of the community, and which originally proceed far before their progress is indicated by any public measure. An intimate knowledge of the domestic history of nations is therefore absolutely necessary to the prognosis of political events. A narrative, defective in this respect, is as useless as a medical treatise which should pass by all the symptoms attendant on the early stage of a disease and mention only what occurs when the patient is beyond the reach of remedies.

A historian, such as we have been attempting to describe, would indeed be an intellectual prodigy. In his mind, powers scarcely compatible with each other must be tempered into an exquisite harmony. We shall sooner see another Shakspeare or another Homer. The highest excellence to which any single faculty can be brought would be less surprising than such a happy and delicate combination of qualities. Yet the contemplation of imaginary models is not an unpleasant or useless employment of the mind. It cannot indeed produce perfection; but it produces improvement and nourishes that generous and liberal fastidiousness which is not inconsistent with the strongest sensibility to merit, and which, while it exalts our conceptions of the art, does not render us unjust to the artist.

MILL ON GOVERNMENT.

(MARCH 1829.)

Essays on Government, Jurisprudence, the Liberty of the Press, Prisons, and Prison Discipline, Colonies, the Law of Nations, and Education. By JAMES MILL, Esq., author of the History of British India. Reprinted by permission from the Supplement to the Encyclopædia Britannica. (Not for sale.) London, 1828.

OF those philosophers who call themselves Utilitarians, and whom others generally call Benthamites, Mr Mill is, with the exception of the illustrious founder of the sect, by far the most distinguished. The little work now before us contains a summary of the opinions held by this gentleman and his brethren on several subjects most important to society. All the seven essays of which it consists abound in curious matter. But at present we intend to confine our remarks to the Treatise on Government, which stands first in the volume. On some future occasion, we may perhaps attempt to do justice to the rest.

It must be owned that to do justice to any composition of Mr Mill is not, in the opinion of his admirers, a very easy task. They do not, indeed, place him in the same rank with Mr Bentham; but the terms in which they extol the disciple, though feeble when compared with the hyperboles of adoration employed by them in speaking of the master, are as strong as any sober man would allow himself to use concerning Locke or Bacon. The essay before us is perhaps the most remarkable of the works to which Mr Mill owes his fame. By the members of his sect, it is considered as perfect and unanswerable. Every part of it is an article of their faith; and the damnatory clauses, in which their creed abounds far beyond any theological symbol with which we are acquainted, are strong and full against all who reject any portion of what is so irrefragably established. No man, they maintain, who has understanding sufficient to carry him through the first proposition of Euclid, can read this masterpiece of demonstration and honestly declare that he remains unconvinced.

We have formed a very different opinion of this work. We think that the theory of Mr Mill rests altogether on false principles, and that even on those false principles he does not reason logically. Nevertheless, we do not think it strange that his speculations should have filled the Utilitarians with admiration. We have been for some time past inclined to suspect that these people, whom some regard as the lights of the world and others as incarnate demons, are in general ordinary men, with narrow understandings and little information. The contempt which they express for elegant literature is evidently the contempt of ignorance. We apprehend that many of them are persons who, having read little or nothing, are delighted to be rescued from the sense of their own inferiority by some teacher who assures them that the studies which they have neglected are of no value, puts five or six phrases into their mouths, lends them an old number of the Westminster Review, and in a month transforms them into philosophers. Mingled with these smatterers, whose attainments just suffice to elevate them from the insignificance of dunces to the dignity of bores, and to spread dismay among their pious aunts and grandmothers, there are, we well know, many well-meaning men who have really read and thought much; but whose reading and meditation have been almost exclusively confined to one class of subjects; and who, consequently, though they possess much valuable knowledge respecting those subjects, are by no means so well qualified to judge of a great system as if they had taken a more enlarged view of literature and society.

Nothing is more amusing or instructive than to observe the manner in which people who think themselves wiser than all the rest of the world fall into snares which the simple good sense of their neighbours detects and avoids. It is one of the principal tenets of the Utilitarians that sentiment and eloquence serve only to impede the pursuit of truth. They therefore affect a quakerly plainness, or rather a cynical negligence and impurity, of style. The strongest arguments, when clothed in brilliant language, seem to them so much wordy nonsense. In the meantime they surrender their understandings, with a facility found in no other party, to the meanest and most abject sophisms, provided those sophisms come before them disguised with the externals of demonstration. They do not seem to know that logic has its illusions as well as rhetoric,—that a fallacy may lurk in a syllogism as well as in a metaphor.

Mr Mill is exactly the writer to please people of this description. His arguments are stated with the utmost affectation of precision; his divisions are awfully formal; and his style is generally as dry as that of Euclid's Elements. Whether this be a merit, we must be permitted to doubt. Thus much is certain: that the ages in which the true principles of philosophy were least understood were those in which the ceremonial of logic was most strictly observed, and that the time from which we date the rapid progress of the experimental sciences was also the time at which a less exact and formal way of writing came into use.

The style which the Utilitarians admire suits only those subjects on which it is possible to reason *a priori*. It grew up with the verbal sophistry which flourished during the dark ages. With that sophistry it fell before the Baconian philosopher in the day of the great deliverance of the human mind. The inductive method not only endured but required greater freedom of diction. It was impossible to reason from phenomena up to principles, to mark slight shades of difference in quality, or to estimate the comparative effect of two opposite considerations between which there was no common measure, by means of the naked and meagre jargon of the schoolmen. Of those schoolmen Mr Mill has inherited both the spirit and the style. He is an Aristotelian of the fifteenth century, born out of due season. We have here an elaborate treatise on Government, from which, but for two or three passing allusions, it would not appear that the author was aware that any governments actually existed among men. Certain propensities of human nature are assumed; and from these premises the whole science of politics is synthetically deduced! We can scarcely persuade ourselves that we are not reading a book written before the time of Bacon and Galileo,—a book written in those days in which physicians reasoned from the nature of heat to the treatment of fever, and astronomers proved syllogistically that the planets could have no independent motion,—because the heavens were incorruptible, and nature abhorred a vacuum !

The reason, too, which Mr Mill has assigned for taking this course strikes us as most extraordinary.

"Experience," says he, "if we look only at the outside of the facts, appears to be *divided* on this subject. Absolute monarchy, under Neros and Caligulas, under such men as the Emperors of Morocco and Sultans of Turkey, is the scourge of human nature. On the other side, the people of Denmark, tired out with the oppression of an aristocracy, resolved that their king should be absolute ; and, under their absolute monarch, are as well governed as any people in Europe."

This Mr Mill actually gives as a reason for pursuing the *a priori* method. But, in our judgment, the very circumstances which he mentions irresistibly prove that the *a priori* method is altogether unfit for investigations of this kind, and that the only way to arrive at the truth is by induction. *Experience* can never be divided, or even appear to be divided, except with reference to some hypothesis. When we say that one fact is inconsistent with another fact, we mean only that it is inconsistent with *the theory* which we have founded on that other fact. But, if the fact be certain, the unavoidable conclusion is that our theory is false ; and, in order to correct it, we must reason back from an enlarged collection of facts to principles.

Now here we have two governments which, by Mr Mill's own account, come under the same head in his *theoretical* classification. It is evident, therefore, that, by reasoning on that theoretical classification, we shall be brought to the conclusion that these two forms of government must produce the same effects. But Mr Mill himself tells us that they do not produce the same effects. Hence he infers that the only way to get at truth is to place implicit confidence in that chain of proof *a priori* from which it appears that they must produce the same effects ! To believe at once in a theory and in a fact which contradicts it is an exercise of faith sufficiently hard : but to believe in a theory *because* a fact contradicts it is what neither philosopher nor pope ever before required. This, however, is what Mr Mill demands of us. He seems to think that, if all despots, without exception, governed ill, it would be unnecessary to prove, by a synthetical argument, what would then be sufficiently clear from experience. But, as some despots will be so perverse as to govern well, he finds himself compelled to prove the impossibility of their governing well by that synthetical argument which would have been superfluous had not the facts contradicted it. He reasons *a priori*, because the phenomena are not what, by reasoning *a priori*, he will prove them to be. In other words, he reasons *a priori*, because, by so reasoning, he is certain to arrive at a false conclusion !

In the course of the examination to which we propose to subject the speculations of Mr Mill we shall have to notice many other curious instances of that turn of mind which the passage above quoted indicates.

The first chapter of his Essay relates to the ends of government. The conception on this subject, he tells us, which exists in the minds of most men is vague and undistinguishing. He first assumes, justly enough, that the end of government is "to increase to the utmost the pleasures, and diminish to the utmost the pains, which men derive from each other." He then proceeds to show, with great form, that "the greatest possible happiness of society is attained by insuring to every man the greatest possible quantity of the produce of his labour." To effect this is, in his opinion, the end of government. It is remarkable that Mr Mill, with all his affected display of precision, has here given a description of the ends of government far less precise than that which is in the mouths of the vulgar. The first man with whom Mr Mill may travel in a stage coach will tell him that government exists for the protection of the *persons* and property of men. But Mr Mill seems to think that the preservation of property is the first and only object. It is true, doubtless, that many of the injuries which are offered to the persons of men proceed from a desire to possess their property. But the practice of vindictive assassination as it has existed in some parts of Europe—the practice of fighting wanton and sanguinary duels, like those of the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries, in which bands of seconds risked their lives as well as the principals ;—these practices, and many others which might be named, are evidently injurious to society; and we do not see how a government which tolerated them could be said "to diminish to the utmost the pains which men derive from each other." Therefore, according to Mr Mill's very correct assumption, such a government would not perfectly accomplish the end of its institution. Yet such a government might, as far as we can perceive, "insure to every man the greatest possible quantity of the produce of his labour." Therefore such a government might, according to Mr Mill's subsequent doctrine, perfectly accomplish the end of its institution. The matter is not of much consequence, except as an instance of that slovenliness of thinking which is often concealed beneath a peculiar ostentation of logical neatness.

Having determined the ends, Mr Mill proceeds to consider the means. For the preservation of property some portion of the community must be intrusted with power. This is government; and the question is, how are those to whom the necessary power is intrusted to be prevented from abusing it?

Mr Mill first passes in review the simple forms of government. He allows that it would be inconvenient, if not physically impossible, that the whole community should meet in a mass ; it follows, therefore, that the powers of government cannot be directly exercised by the people. But he sees no objection to pure and direct Democracy, except the difficulty which we have mentioned.

"The community," says he. "cannot have an interest opposite to its interests. To affirm this would be a contradiction in terms. The community within itself, and with respect to itself, can have no sinister interest. One community may intend the evil of another ; never its own. This is an indubitable proposition, and one of great importance."

Mr Mill then proceeds to demonstrate that a purely aristocratical form of government is necessarily bad.

"The reason for which government exists is, that one man, if stronger than another, will take from him whatever that other possesses and he desires. But if one man will do this, so will several. And if powers are put into the hands of a comparatively small number, called an aristocracy,—powers which make them stronger than the rest of the community, they will take from the rest of the community as much as they please of the objects of desire. They will thus defeat the very end for which government was instituted. The unfitness, therefore, of an aristocracy to be intrusted with the powers of government, rests on demonstration.

In exactly the same manner Mr Mill proves absolute monarchy to be a bad form of government.

> "If government is founded upon this as a law of human nature, that a man, if able, will take from others anything which they have and he desires, it is sufficiently evident, that when a man is called a king he does not change his nature; so that when he has got power to enable him to take from every man what he pleases, he will take whatever he pleases. To suppose that he will not, is to affirm that government is unnecessary, and that human beings will abstain from injuring one another of their own accord.
>
> "It is very evident that this reasoning extends to every modification of the smaller number. Whenever the powers of government are placed in any hands other than those of the community, whether those of one man, of a few, or of several, those principles of human nature which imply that government is at all necessary, imply that those persons will make use of them to defeat the very end for which government exists."

But is it not possible that a king or an aristocracy may soon be saturated with the objects of their desires, and may then protect the community in the enjoyment of the rest? Mr Mill answers in the negative. He proves, with great pomp, that every man desires to have the actions of every other correspondent to his will. Others can be induced to conform to our will only by motives derived from pleasure or from pain. The infliction of pain is of course direct injury; and, even if it take the milder course, in order to produce obedience by motives derived from pleasure, the government must confer favours. But, as there is no limit to its desire of obedience, there will be no limit to its disposition to confer favours; and, as it can confer favours only by plundering the people, there will be no limit to its disposition to plunder the people. It is therefore not true that there is in the mind of a king, or in the minds of an aristocracy, any point of saturation with the objects of desire.

Mr Mill then proceeds to show that, as monarchical and oligarchical governments can influence men by motives drawn from pain, as well as by motives drawn from pleasure, they will carry their cruelty, as well as their rapacity, to a frightful extent. As he seems greatly to admire his own reasonings on this subject, we think it but fair to let him speak for himself.

> "The chain of inference in this case is close and strong to a most unusual degree. A man desires that the actions of other men shall be instantly and accurately correspondent to his will. He desires that the actions of the greatest possible number shall be so. Terror is the grand instrument. Terror can work only through assurance that evil will follow any failure of conformity between the will and the actions willed. Every failure must therefore be punished. As there are no bounds to the mind's desire of its pleasure, there are, of course, no bounds to its desire of perfection in the instruments of that pleasure. There are, therefore, no bounds to its desire of exactness in the conformity between its will and the actions willed; and by consequence to the strength of that terror which is its procuring cause. Even the most minute failure must be visited with the heaviest infliction; and as failure in extreme exactness must frequently happen, the occasions of cruelty must be incessant.

"We have thus arrived at several conclusions of the highest possible importance. We have seen that the principle of human nature, upon which the necessity of government is founded, the propensity of one man to possess himself of the objects of desire at the cost of another, leads on, by infallible sequence, where power over a community is attained, and nothing checks, not only to that degree of plunder which leaves the members (excepting always the recipients and instruments of the plunder) the bare means of subsistence, but to that degree of cruelty which is necessary to keep in existence the most intense terrors."

Now, no man who has the least knowledge of the real state of the world, either in former ages or at the present moment, can possibly be convinced, though he may perhaps be bewildered, by arguments like these. During the last two centuries, some hundreds of absolute princes have reigned in Europe. Is it true, that their cruelty has kept in existence the most intense degree of terror; that their rapacity has left no more than the bare means of subsistence to any of their subjects, their ministers and soldiers excepted? Is this true of all of them? Of one half of them? Of one tenth part of them? Of a single one? Is it true, in the full extent, even of Philip the Second, of Louis the Fifteenth, or of the Emperor Paul? But it is scarcely necessary to quote history. No man of common sense, however ignorant he may be of books, can be imposed on by Mr Mill's argument; because no man of common sense can live among his fellow-creatures for a day without seeing innumerable facts which contradict it. It is our business, however, to point out its fallacy; and happily the fallacy is not very recondite.

We grant that rulers will take as much as they can of the objects of their desires; and that, when the agency of other men is necessary to that end, they will attempt by all means in their power to enforce the prompt obedience of such men. But what are the objects of human desire? Physical pleasure, no doubt, in part. But the mere appetites which we have in common with the animals would be gratified almost as cheaply and easily as those of the animals are gratified, if nothing were given to taste, to ostentation, or to the affections. How small a portion of the income of a gentleman in easy circumstances is laid out merely in giving pleasurable sensations to the body of the possessor! The greater part even of what is spent on his kitchen and his cellar goes, not to titillate his palate, but to keep up his character for hospitality, to save him from the reproach of meanness in housekeeping, and to cement the ties of good neighbourhood. It is clear that a king or an aristocracy may be supplied to satiety with mere corporal pleasures, at an expense which the rudest and poorest community would scarcely feel.

Those tastes and propensities which belong to us as reasoning and imaginative beings are not indeed so easily gratified. There is, we admit, no point of saturation with objects of desire which come under this head. And therefore the argument of Mr Mill will be just, unless there be something in the nature of the objects of desire themselves which is inconsistent with it. Now, of these objects there is none which men in general seem to desire more than the good opinion of others. The hatred and contempt of the public are generally felt to be intolerable. It is probable that our regard for the sentiments of our fellow-creatures springs, by association, from a sense of their ability to hurt or to serve us. But, be this as it may, it is notorious that, when the habit of mind of which we speak has once been formed, men feel extremely solicitous about the opinions of those by whom it is most improbable, nay, absolutely impossible, that they should ever be in the slightest degree injured or benefited. The desire of posthumous fame and the dread of posthumous reproach and execration are feelings from the influence of which scarcely any man is perfectly free, and which in many men are powerful and constant motives of action. As we are afraid that, if we handle this part of the argument after our own manner, we shall incur the reproach of sentimentality, a word which, in the sacred language of the Benthamites, is synonymous with idiocy, we will quote what Mr Mill himself says on the subject, in his Treatise on Jurisprudence.

> " Pains from the moral source are the pains derived from the unfavourable sentiments of mankind. . . . These pains are capable of rising to a height with which hardly any other pains incident to our nature can be compared. There is a certain degree of unfavourableness in the sentiments of his fellow-creatures, under which hardly any man, not below the standard of humanity, can endure to live.
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> " The importance of this powerful agency, for the prevention of injurious acts, is too obvious to need to be illustrated. If sufficiently at command, it would almost supersede the use of other means. . . .
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> " To know how to direct the unfavourable sentiments of mankind, it is necessary to know in as complete, that is, in as comprehensive, a way as possible, what it is which gives them birth. Without entering into the metaphysics of the question, it is a sufficient practical answer, for the present purpose, to say that the unfavourable sentiments of man are excited by everything which hurts them."

It is strange that a writer who considers the pain derived from the unfavourable sentiments of others as so acute that, if sufficiently at command, it would supersede the use of the gallows and the tread-mill, should take no notice of this most important restraint when discussing the question of government. We will attempt to deduce a theory of politics in the mathematical form, in which Mr Mill delights, from the premises with which he has himself furnished us.

PROPOSITION I. THEOREM.

No rulers will do anything which may hurt the people.

This is the thesis to be maintained ; and the following we humbly offer to Mr Mill, as its syllogistic demonstration.

No rulers will do that which produces pain to themselves.

But the unfavourable sentiments of the people will give pain to them.

Therefore no rulers will do anything which may excite the unfavourable sentiments of the people.

But the unfavourable sentiments of the people are excited by everything which hurts them.

Therefore no rulers will do anything which may hurt the people. Which was the thing to be proved.

Having thus, as we think, not unsuccessfully imitated Mr Mill's logic, we do not see why we should not imitate, what is at least equally perfect in its kind, its self-complacency, and proclaim our Εὕρηκα in his own words : " The chain of inference, in this case, is close and strong to a most unusual degree."

The fact is, that, when men, in treating of things which cannot be circumscribed by precise definitions, adopt this mode of reasoning, when once they begin to talk of power, happiness, misery, pain, pleasure, motives, objects of desire, as they talk of lines and numbers, there is no end to the contradictions and absurdities into which they fall. There is no proposition so monstrously untrue in morals or politics that we will not undertake to prove it, by something which shall sound like a logical demonstration from admitted principles.

Mr Mill argues that, if men are not inclined to plunder each other, government is unnecessary; and that, if they are so inclined, the powers of government, when entrusted to a small number of them, will necessarily be abused. Surely it is not by propounding dilemmas of this sort that we are likely to arrive at sound conclusions in any moral science. The whole question is a question of degree. If all men preferred the moderate approbation of their neighbours to any degree of wealth or grandeur, or sensual pleasure, government would be unnecessary. If all men desired wealth so intensely as to be willing to brave the hatred of their fellow-creatures for sixpence, Mr Mill's argument against monarchies and aristocracies would be true to the full extent. But the fact is, that all men have some desires which impel them to injure their neighbours, and some desires which impel them to benefit their neighbours. Now, if there were a community consisting of two classes of men, one of which should be principally influenced by the one set of motives and the other by the other, government would clearly be necessary to restrain the class which was eager for plunder and careless of reputation: and yet the powers of government might be safely intrusted to the class which was chiefly actuated by the love of approbation. Now, it might with no small plausibility be maintained that, in many countries, *there are* two classes which, in some degree, answer to this description; that the poor compose the class which government is established to restrain, and the people of some property the class to which the powers of government may without danger be confided. It might be said that a man who can barely earn a livelihood by severe labour is under stronger temptations to pillage others than a man who enjoys many luxuries. It might be said that a man who is lost in the crowd is less likely to have the fear of public opinion before his eyes than a man whose station and mode of living render him conspicuous. We do not assert all this. We only say that it was Mr Mill's business to prove the contrary; and that, not having proved the contrary, he is not entitled to say, "that those principles which imply that government is at all necessary, imply that an aristocracy will make use of its power to defeat the end for which governments exist." This is not true, unless it be true that a rich man is as likely to covet the goods of his neighbours as a poor man, and that a poor man is as likely to be solicitous about the opinions of his neighbours as a rich man.

But we do not see that, by reasoning *a priori* on such subjects as these, it is possible to advance one single step. We know that every man has some desires which he can gratify only by hurting his neighbours, and some which he can gratify only by pleasing them. Mr Mill has chosen to look only at one-half of human nature, and to reason on the motives which impel men to oppress and despoil others, as if they were the only motives by which men could possibly be influenced. We have already shown that, by taking the other half of the human character, and reasoning on it as if it were the whole, we can bring out a result diametrically opposite to that at which Mr Mill has arrived. We can, by such a process, easily prove that any form of government is good, or that all government is superfluous.

We must now accompany Mr Mill on the next stage of his argument.

Does any combination of the three simple forms of government afford the requisite securities against the abuse of power? Mr Mill complains that those who maintain the affirmative generally beg the question; and proceeds to settle the point by proving, after his fashion, that no combination of the three simple forms, or of any two of them, can possibly exist.

"From the principles which we have already laid down it follows that, of the objects of human desire, and, speaking more definitely, of the means to the ends of human desire, namely, wealth and power, each party will endeavour to obtain as much as possible.

"If any expedient presents itself to any of the supposed parties effectual to this end, and not opposed to any preferred object of pursuit, we may infer with certainty that it will be adopted. One effectual expedient is not more effectual than obvious. Any two of the parties, by combining, may swallow up the third. That such combination will take place appears to be as certain as anything which depends upon human will; because there are strong motives in favour of it, and none that can be conceived in opposition to it. . . . The mixture of three of the kinds of government, it is thus evident, cannot possibly exist. . . . It may be proper to inquire whether an union may not be possible of two of them. . . .

"Let us first suppose, that monarchy is united with aristocracy. Their power is equal or not equal. If it is not equal, it follows, as a necessary consequence, from the principles which we have already established, that the stronger will take from the weaker till it engrosses the whole. The only question therefore is, What will happen when the power is equal?

"In the first place, it seems impossible that such equality should ever exist. How is it to be established? or, by what criterion is it to be ascertained? If there is no such criterion, it must, in all cases, be the result of chance. If so, the chances against it are as infinity to one. The idea, therefore, is wholly chimerical and absurd. . . .

"In this doctrine of the mixture of the simple forms of government is included the celebrated theory of the balance among the component parts of a government. By this it is supposed that, when a government is composed of monarchy, aristocracy, and democracy, they balance one another, and by mutual checks produce good government. A few words will suffice to show that, if any theory deserves the epithets of 'wild, visionary, and chimerical,' it is that of the balance. If there are three powers, how is it possible to prevent two of them from combining to swallow up the third?

"The analysis which we have already performed will enable us to trace rapidly the concatenation of causes and effects in this imagined case.

"We have already seen that the interests of the community, considered in the aggregate, or in the democratical point of view, is, that each individual should receive protection; and that the powers which are constituted for that purpose should be employed exclusively for that purpose. . . . . We have also seen that the interest of the king and of the governing aristocracy is directly the reverse. It is to have unlimited power over the rest of the community, and to use it for their own advantage. In the supposed case of the balance of the monarchical, aristocratical, and democratical powers, it cannot be for the interest of either the monarchy or the aristocracy to combine with the democracy; because it is the interest of the democracy, or community at large, that neither the king nor the aristocracy should have one particle of power, or one particle of the wealth of the community, for their own advantage.

"The democracy or community have all possible motives to endeavour to prevent the monarchy and aristocracy from exercising power, or obtaining the wealth of the community for their own advantage. The monarchy and aristocracy have all possible motives for endeavouring to obtain unlimited power over the persons and property of the community. The consequence is inevitable: they have all possible motives for combining to obtain that power."

If any part of this passage be more eminently absurd than another, it is, we think, the argument by which Mr Mill proves that there cannot be an union of monarchy and aristocracy. Their power, he says, must be equal or not equal. But of equality there is no criterion. Therefore the chances against its existence are as infinity to one. If the power be not equal, then it follows, from the principles of human nature, that the stronger will take from the weaker, till it has engrossed the whole.

Now, if there be no criterion of equality between two portions of power there can be no common measure of portions of power. Therefore it is utterly impossible to compare them together. But where two portions of power are of the same kind, there is no difficulty in ascertaining, sufficiently for all practical purposes, whether they are equal or unequal. It is easy to judge whether two men run equally fast, or can lift equal weights. Two arbitrators, whose joint decision is to be final, and neither of whom can do any thing without the assent of the other, possess equal power. Two electors, each of whom has a vote for a borough, possess, in that respect, equal power. If not, all Mr Mill's political theories fall to the ground at once. For, if it be impossible to ascertain whether two portions of power are equal, he never can show that even under a system of universal suffrage, a minority might not carry every thing their own way, against the wishes and interests of the majority.

Where there are two portions of power differing in kind, there is, we admit, no criterion of equality. But then, in such a case, it is absurd to talk, as Mr Mill does, about the stronger and the weaker. Popularly, indeed, and with reference to some particular objects, these words may very fairly be used. But to use them mathematically is altogether improper. If we are speaking of a boxing-match, we may say that some famous bruiser has greater bodily power than any man in England. If we are speaking of a pantomime, we may say the same of some very agile harlequin. But it would be talking nonsense to say, in general, that the power of Harlequin either exceeded that of the pugilist or fell short of it.

If Mr Mill's argument be good as between different branches of a legislature, it is equally good as between sovereign powers. Every government, it may be said, will, if it can, take the objects of its desires from every other. If the French government can subdue England it will do so. If the English government can subdue France it will do so. But the power of England and France is either equal or not equal. The chance that it is not exactly equal is as infinity to one, and may safely be left out of the account; and then the stronger will infallibly take from the weaker till the weaker is altogether enslaved.

Surely the answer to all this hubbub of unmeaning words is the plainest possible. For some purposes France is stronger than England. For some purposes England is stronger than France. For some, neither has any power at all. France has the greater population, England the greater capital; France has the greater army, England the greater fleet. For an expedition to Rio Janeiro or the Philippines, England has the greater power. For a war on the Po or the Danube, France has the greater power. But neither has power sufficient to keep the other in quiet subjection for a month. Invasion would be very perilous; the idea of complete conquest on either side utterly ridiculous. This is the manly and sensible way of discussing such questions. The *ergo*, or rather the *argal*, of Mr Mill cannot impose on a child. Yet we ought scarcely to say this; for we remember to have heard *a child* ask whether Bonaparte was stronger than an elephant!

Mr Mill reminds us of those philosophers of the sixteenth century who, having satisfied themselves *a priori* that the rapidity with which bodies descended to the earth varied exactly as their weights, refused to believe the contrary on the evidence of their own eyes and ears. The British constitution, according to Mr Mill's classification, is a mixture of monarchy and aristocracy; one House of Parliament being composed of hereditary nobles, and the other almost entirely chosen by a privileged class who possess the elective franchise on account of their property, or their connection with certain corporations. Mr Mill's argument proves that, from the time that these two powers were mingled in our government, that is, from the very first dawn of our history, one or the other must have been constantly encroaching. According to him, moreover, all the encroachments must have been on one side. For the first encroachment could only have been made by the stronger; and that first encroachment would have made the stronger stronger still. It is, therefore, matter of absolute demonstration, that either the Parliament was stronger than the Crown in the reign of Henry VIII., or that the Crown was stronger than the Parliament in 1641. "Hippocrate dira ce que lui plaira," says the girl in Moliere; "mais le cocher est mort." Mr Mill may say what he pleases; but the English constitution is still alive. That since the Revolution the Parliament has possessed great power in the State, is what nobody will dispute. The King, on the other hand, can create new peers, and can dissolve Parliaments. William sustained severe mortifications from the House of Commons, and was, indeed, unjustifiably oppressed. Anne was desirous to change a ministry which had a majority in both Houses. She watched her moment for a dissolution, created twelve Tory peers, and succeeded. Thirty years later, the House of Commons drove Walpole from his seat. In 1784, George III. was able to keep Mr Pitt in office in the face of a majority of the House of Commons. In 1804, the apprehension of a defeat in Parliament compelled the same King to part from his most favoured minister. But, in 1807, he was able to do exactly what Anne had done nearly a hundred years before. Now, had the power of the King increased during the intervening century, or had it remained stationary? Is it possible that the one lot among the infinite number should have fallen to us? If not, Mr Mill has proved that one of the two parties must have been constantly taking from the other. Many of the ablest men in England think that the influence of the Crown has, on the whole, increased since the reign of Anne. Others think that the Parliament has been growing in strength. But of this there is no doubt, that both sides possessed great power then, and possess great power now. Surely, if there were the least truth in the argument of Mr Mill, it could not possibly be a matter of doubt, at the end of a hundred and twenty years, whether the one side or the other had been the gainer.

But we ask pardon. We forgot that a fact, irreconcilable with Mr Mill's theory, furnishes, in his opinion, the strongest reason for adhering to the theory. To take up the question in another manner, is it not plain that there may be two bodies, each possessing a perfect and entire power, which cannot be taken from it without its own concurrence? What is the meaning of the words stronger and weaker, when applied to such bodies as these? The one may, indeed, by physical force, altogether destroy the other. But this is not the question. A third party, a general of their own, for example, may, by physical force, subjugate them both. Nor is there any form of government, Mr Mill's utopian democracy not excepted, secure from such an occurrence. We are speaking of the powers with which the constitution invests the two branches of the legislature; and we ask Mr Mill how, on his own principles, he can maintain that one of them will be able to encroach on the other, if the consent of the other be necessary to such encroachment?

Mr Mill tells us that, if a government be composed of the three simple forms, which he will not admit the British constitution to be, two of the component parts will inevitably join against the third. Now, if two of them combine and act as one, this case evidently resolves itself into the last: and all the observations which we have just made will fully apply to it. Mr Mill says, that "any two of the parties, by combining, may swallow up the third;" and afterwards asks, "How is it possible to prevent two of them from combining to swallow up the third?" Surely Mr Mill must be aware that in politics two is not always the double of one. If the concurrence of all the three branches of the legislature be necessary to every law, each branch will possess constitutional power sufficient to protect it against anything but that physical force from which no form of government is secure. Mr. Mill reminds us of the Irishman, who could not be brought to understand how one juryman could possibly starve out eleven others.

But is it certain that two of the branches of the legislature will combine against the third? "It appears to be as certain," says Mr. Mill, "as anything which depends upon human will; because there are strong motives in favour of it, and none that can be conceived in opposition to it." He subsequently sets forth what these motives are. The interest of the democracy is that each individual should receive protection. The interest of the King and the aristocracy is to have all the power that they can obtain, and to use it for their own ends. Therefore the King and the aristocracy have all possible motives for combining against the people. If our readers will look back to the passage quoted above, they will see that we represent Mr. Mill's argument quite fairly.

Now we should have thought that, without the help of either history or experience, Mr. Mill would have discovered, by the light of his own logic, the fallacy which lurks, and indeed scarcely lurks, under this pretended demonstration. The interest of the King may be opposed to that of the people. But is it identical with that of the aristocracy? In the very page which contains this argument, intended to prove that the King and the aristocracy will coalesce against the people, Mr. Mill attempts to show that there is so strong an opposition of interest between the King and the aristocracy that if the powers of government are divided between them the one will inevitably usurp the power of the other. If so, he is not entitled to conclude that they will combine to destroy the power of the people merely because their interests may be at variance with those of the people. He is bound to show, not merely that in all communities the interest of a king must be opposed to that of the people, but also that, in all communities, it must be more directly opposed to the interest of the people than to the interest of the aristocracy. But he has not shown this. Therefore he has not proved his proposition on his own principles. To quote history would be a mere waste of time. Every schoolboy, whose studies have gone so far as the Abridgments of Goldsmith, can mention instances in which sovereigns have allied themselves with the people against the aristocracy, and in which the nobles have allied themselves with the people against the sovereign. In general, when there are three parties, every one of which has much to fear from the others, it is not found that two of them combine to plunder the third. If such a combination be formed, it scarcely ever effects its purpose. It soon becomes evident which member of the coalition is likely to be the greater gainer by the transaction. He becomes an object of jealousy to his ally, who, in all probability, changes sides, and compels him to restore what he has taken. Everybody knows how Henry VIII. trimmed between Francis and the Emperor Charles. But it is idle to cite examples of the operation of a principle which is illustrated in almost every page of history, ancient or modern, and to which almost every state in Europe has, at one time or another, been indebted for its independence.

Mr Mill has now, as he conceives, demonstrated that the simple forms of government are bad, and that the mixed forms cannot possibly exist. There is still, however, it seems, a hope for mankind.

"In the grand discovery of modern times, the system of representation, the solution of all the difficulties, both speculative and practical, will perhaps be found. If it cannot, we seem to be forced upon the extraordinary conclusion, that good government is impossible. For, as there is no individual or combination of individuals, except the community itself, who would not have an interest in bad government if intrusted with its powers, and as the community itself is incapable of exercising those powers, and must intrust them to certain individuals, the conclusion is obvious: the community itself must check those individuals; else they will follow their interest, and produce bad government. But how is it the community can check? The community can act only when assembled; and when assembled, it is incapable of acting. The community, however, can choose representatives."

The next question is—How must the representative body be constituted? Mr Mill lays down two principles, about which, he says, "it is unlikely that there will be any dispute."

"First, The checking body must have a degree of power sufficient for the business of checking."

"Secondly, It must have an identity of interest with the community. Otherwise, it will make a mischievous use of its power."

The first of these propositions certainly admits of no dispute. As to the second, we shall hereafter take occasion to make some remarks on the sense in which Mr Mill understands the words "interest of the community."

It does not appear very easy, on Mr Mill's principles, to find out any mode of making the interest of the representative body identical with that of the constituent body. The plan proposed by Mr Mill is simply that of very frequent election. "As it appears," says he, "that limiting the duration of their power is a security against the sinister interest of the people's representatives, so it appears that it is the only security of which the nature of the case admits." But all the arguments by which Mr Mill has proved monarchy and aristocracy to be pernicious will, as it appears to us, equally prove this security to be no security at all. Is it not clear that the representatives, as soon as they are elected, are an aristocracy, with an interest opposed to the interest of the community? Why should they not pass a law for extending the term of their power from one year to ten years, or declare themselves senators for life? If the whole legislative power is given to them, they will be constitutionally competent to do this. If part of the legislative power is withheld from them, to whom is that part given? Is the people to retain it, and to express its assent or dissent in primary assemblies? Mr Mill himself tells us that the community can only act when assembled, and that, when assembled, it is incapable of acting. Or is it to be provided, as in some of the American republics, that no change in the fundamental laws shall be made without the consent of a convention, specially elected for the purpose? Still the difficulty recurs: Why may not the members of the convention betray their trust, as well as the members of the ordinary legislature? When private men, they may have been zealous for the interests of the community. When candidates, they may have pledged themselves to the cause of the constitution. But, as soon as they are a convention, as soon as they are separated from the people, as soon as the supreme power is put into their hands, commences that interest opposite to the interest of the community which must, according to Mr Mill, produce measures opposite to the interests of the community. We must find some other means, therefore, of checking this check upon a check; some other prop to carry the tortoise, that carries the elephant, that carries the world.

We know well that there is no real danger in such a case. But there is no danger only because there is no truth in Mr Mill's principles. If men were what he represents them to be, the letter of the very constitution which he recommends would afford no safeguard against bad government. The real security is this, that legislators will be deterred by the fear of resistance and of infamy from acting in the manner which we have described. But restraints, exactly the same in kind, and differing only in degree, exist in all forms of government. That broad line of distinction which Mr Mill tries to point out between monarchies and aristocracies on the one side, and democracies on the other, has in fact no existence. In no form of government is there an absolute identity of interest between the people and their rulers. In every form of government, the rulers stand in some awe of the people. The fear of resistance and the sense of shame operate in a certain degree, on the most absolute kings and the most illiberal oligarchies. And nothing but the fear of resistance and the sense of shame preserves the freedom of the most democratic communities from the encroachments of their annual and biennial delegates.

We have seen how Mr Mill proposes to render the interest of the representative body identical with that of the constituent body. The next question is, in what manner the interest of the constituent body is to be rendered identical with that of the community. Mr Mill shows that a minority of the community, consisting even of many thousands, would be a bad constituent body, and, indeed, merely a numerous aristocracy.

"The benefits of the representative system," says he, "are lost in all cases in which the interests of the choosing body are not the same with those of the community. It is very evident, that if the community itself were the choosing body, the interests of the community and that of the choosing body would be the same."

On these grounds Mr Mill recommends that all males of mature age, rich and poor, educated and ignorant, shall have votes. But why not the women too? This question has often been asked in parliamentary debate, and has never, to our knowledge, received a plausible answer. Mr Mill escapes from it as fast as he can. But we shall take the liberty to dwell a little on the words of the oracle. "One thing," says he, "is pretty clear, that all those individuals whose interests are involved in those of other individuals, may be struck off without inconvenience. . . . . In this light women may be regarded, the interest of almost all of whom is involved either in that of their fathers, or in that of their husbands."

If we were to content ourselves with saying, in answer to all the arguments in Mr Mill's essay, that the interest of a king is involved in that of the community, we should be accused, and justly, of talking nonsense. Yet such an assertion would not, as far as we can perceive, be more unreasonable than that which Mr Mill has here ventured to make. Without adducing one fact, without taking the trouble to perplex the question by one sophism, he placidly dogmatises away the interest of one half of the human race. If there be a word of truth in history, women have always been, and still are, over the greater part of the globe, humble companions, playthings, captives, menials, beasts of burden. Except in a few happy and highly civilised communities, they are strictly in a state of personal slavery. Even in those countries where they are best treated, the laws are generally unfavourable to them, with respect to almost all the points in which they are most deeply interested.

Mr Mill is not legislating for England or the United States, but for mankind. Is then the interest of a Turk the same with that of the girls who compose his harem? Is the interest of a Chinese the same with that of the woman whom he harnesses to his plough? Is the interest of an Italian the same with that of the daughter whom he devotes to God? The interest of a respectable Englishman may be said, without any impropriety, to be identical with that of his wife. But why is it so? Because human nature is *not* what Mr Mill conceives it to be; because civilised men, pursuing their own happiness in a social state, are not Yahoos fighting for carrion; because there is a pleasure in being loved and esteemed, as well as in being feared and servilely obeyed. Why does not a gentleman restrict his wife to the bare maintenance which the law would compel him to allow her, that he may have more to spend on his personal pleasures? Because, if he loves her, he has pleasure in seeing her pleased; and because, even if he dislikes her, he is unwilling that the whole neighbourhood should cry shame on his meanness and ill-nature. Why does not the legislature, altogether composed of males, pass a law to deprive women of all civil privileges whatever, and reduce them to the state of slaves? By passing such a law, they would gratify what Mr

Mill tells us is an inseparable part of human nature, the desire to possess unlimited power of inflicting pain upon others. That they do not pass such a law, though they have the power to pass it, and that no man in England wishes to see such a law passed, proves that the desire to possess unlimited power of inflicting pain is not inseparable from human nature.

If there be in this country an identity of interest between the two sexes, it cannot possibly arise from anything but the pleasure of being loved, and of communicating happiness. For, that it does not spring from the mere instinct of sex, the treatment which women experience over the greater part of the world abundantly proves. And, if it be said that our laws of marriage have produced it, this only removes the argument a step further; for those laws have been made by males. Now, if the kind feelings of one half of the species be a sufficient security for the happiness of the other, why may not the kind feelings of a monarch or an aristocracy be sufficient at least to prevent them from grinding the people to the very utmost of their power?

If Mr Mill will examine why it is that women are better treated in England than in Persia, he may perhaps find out, in the course of his inquiries, why it is that the Danes are better governed than the subjects of Caligula.

We now come to the most important practical question in the whole essay. Is it desirable that all males arrived at years of discretion should vote for representatives, or should a pecuniary qualification be required? Mr Mill's opinion is, that the lower the qualification the better; and that the best system is that in which there is none at all.

> "The qualification," says he, "must either be such as to embrace the majority of the population, or something less than the majority. Suppose, in the first place, that it embraces the majority, the question is, whether the majority would have an interest in oppressing those who, upon this supposition, would be deprived of political power? If we reduce the calculation to its elements, we shall see that the interest which they would have of this deplorable kind, though it would be something, would not be very great. Each man of the majority, if the majority were constituted the governing body, would have something less than the benefit of oppressing a single man. If the majority were twice as great as the minority, each man of the majority would only have one half the benefit of oppressing a single man. . . . Suppose in the second place, that the qualification did not admit a body of electors so large as the majority, in that case, taking again the calculation in its elements, we shall see that each man would have a benefit equal to that derived from the oppression of more than one man; and that, in proportion as the elective body constituted a smaller and smaller minority, the benefit of misrule to the elective body would be increased, and bad government would be insured."

The first remark which we have to make on this argument is, that, by Mr Mill's own account, even a government in which every human being should vote would still be defective. For, under a system of universal suffrage, the majority of the electors return the representative, and the majority of the representatives make the law. The whole people may vote, therefore; but only the majority govern. So that, by Mr Mill's own confession, the most perfect system of government conceivable is one in which the interest of the ruling body to oppress, though not great, is something.

But is Mr Mill in the right when he says that such an interest could not be very great? We think not. If, indeed, every man in the community possessed an equal share of what Mr Mill calls the objects of desire, the majority would probably abstain from plundering the minority. A large minority would offer a vigorous resistance; and the property of a small minority would not repay the other members of the community for the trouble of dividing it. But it happens that in all civilised communities there is a small minority of rich men, and a great majority of poor men. If there were a thousand men with ten pounds apiece, it would not be worth while for nine hundred and ninety of them to rob ten, and it would be a bold attempt for six hundred of them to rob four hundred. But, if ten of them had a hundred thousand pounds apiece, the case would be very different. There would then be much to be got, and nothing to be feared.

"That one human being will desire to render the person and property of another subservient to his pleasures, notwithstanding the pain or loss of pleasure which it may occasion to that other individual, is," according to Mr Mill, "the foundation of government." That the property of the rich minority can be made subservient to the pleasures of the poor majority will scarcely be denied. But Mr Mill proposes to give the poor majority power over the rich minority. Is it possible to doubt to what, on his own principles, such an arrangement must lead?

It may perhaps be said that, in the long run, it is for the interest of the people that property should be secure, and that therefore they will respect it. We answer thus:—It cannot be pretended that it is not for the immediate interest of the people to plunder the rich. Therefore, even if it were quite certain that, in the long run, the people would, as a body, lose by doing so, it would not necessarily follow that the fear of remote ill consequences would overcome the desire of immediate acquisitions. Every individual might flatter himself that the punishment would not fall on him. Mr Mill himself tells us, in his Essay on Jurisprudence, that no quantity of evil which is remote and uncertain will suffice to prevent crime.

But we are rather inclined to think that it would, on the whole, be for the interest of the majority to plunder the rich. If so, the Utilitarians will say, that the rich *ought* to be plundered. We deny the inference. For, in the first place, if the object of government be the greatest happiness of the greatest number, the intensity of the suffering which a measure inflicts must be taken into consideration, as well as the number of the sufferers. In the next place, we have to notice one most important distinction which Mr Mill has altogether overlooked. Throughout his essay, he confounds the community with the species. He talks of the greatest happiness of the greatest number: but, when we examine his reasonings, we find that he thinks only of the greatest number of a single generation.

Therefore, even if we were to concede that all those arguments of which we have exposed the fallacy are unanswerable, we might still deny the conclusion at which the essayist arrives. Even if we were to grant that he had found out the form of government which is best for the majority of the people now living on the face of the earth, we might still without inconsistency maintain that form of government to be pernicious to mankind. It would still be incumbent on Mr Mill to prove that the interest of every generation is identical with the interest of all succeeding generations. And how on his own principles he could do this we are at a loss to conceive.

The case, indeed, is strictly analogous to that of an aristocratic government. In an aristocracy, says Mr Mill, the few being invested with the powers of government, can take the objects of their desires from the people. In the same manner, every generation in turn can gratify itself at the expense of posterity,—priority of time, in the latter case, giving an advantage exactly corresponding to that which superiority of station gives in the former. That an aristocracy will abuse its advantage, is, according to Mr Mill, matter of demonstration. Is it not equally certain that the whole people will do the same: that, if they have the power, they will commit waste of every sort on the estate of mankind, and transmit it to posterity impoverished and desolated?

How is it possible for any person who holds the doctrines of Mr Mill to doubt that the rich, in a democracy such as that which he recommends, would be pillaged as unmercifully as under a Turkish Pacha? It is no doubt for the interest of the next generation, and it may be for the remote interest of the present generation, that property should be held sacred. And so no doubt it will be for the interest of the next Pacha, and even for that of the present Pacha, if he should hold office long, that the inhabitants of his Pachalik should be encouraged to accumulate wealth. Scarcely any despotic sovereign has plundered his subjects to a large extent without having reason before the end of his reign to regret it. Everybody knows how bitterly Louis the Fourteenth, towards the close of his life, lamented his former extravagance. If that magnificent prince had not expended millions on Marli and Versailles, and tens of millions on the aggrandisement of his grandson, he would not have been compelled at last to pay servile court to low-born money-lenders, to humble himself before men on whom, in the days of his pride, he would not have vouchsafed to look, for the means of supporting even his own household. Examples to the same effect might easily be multiplied. But despots, we see, do plunder their subjects, though history and experience tell them that, by prematurely exacting the means of profusion, they are in fact devouring the seed-corn from which the future harvest of revenue is to spring. Why then should we suppose that the people will be deterred from procuring immediate relief and enjoyment by the fear of distant calamities, of calamities which perhaps may not be fully felt till the times of their grandchildren?

These conclusions are strictly drawn from Mr Mill's own principles: and, unlike most of the conclusions which he has himself drawn from those principles, they are not as far as we know contradicted by facts. The case of the United States is not in point. In a country where the necessaries of life are cheap and the wages of labour high, where a man who has no capital but his legs and arms may expect to become rich by industry and frugality, it is not very decidedly even for the immediate advantage of the poor to plunder the rich; and the punishment of doing so would very speedily follow the offence. But in countries in which the great majority live from hand to mouth, and in which vast masses of wealth have been accumulated by a comparatively small number, the case is widely different. The immediate want is, at particular seasons, craving, imperious, irresistible. In our own time it has steeled men to the fear of the gallows, and urged them on the point of the bayonet. And, if these men had at their command that gallows and those bayonets which now scarcely restrain them, what is to be expected? Nor is this state of things one which can exist only under a bad government. If there be the least truth in the doctrines of the school to which Mr Mill belongs, the increase of population will necessarily produce it everywhere. The increase of population is accelerated by good and cheap government. Therefore, the better the government, the greater is the inequality of conditions: and the greater the inequality of conditions, the stronger are the motives which impel the populace to spoliation. As for America, we appeal to the twentieth century.

It is scarcely necessary to discuss the effects which a general spoliation of the rich would produce. It may indeed happen that, where a legal and political system full of abuses is inseparably bound up with the institution of property, a nation may gain by a single convulsion, in which both perish together. The price is fearful. But if, when the shock is over, a new order of things should arise under which property may enjoy security, the industry of individuals will soon repair the devastation. Thus we entertain no doubt that the Revolution was, on the whole, a most salutary event for France. But would France have gained if, ever since the year 1793, she had been governed by a democratic convention? If Mr Mill's principles be sound, we say that almost her whole capital would by this time have been annihilated. As soon as the first explosion was beginning to be forgotten, as soon as wealth again began to germinate, as soon as the poor again began to compare their cottages and salads with the hotels and banquets of the rich, there would have been another scramble for property, another maximum, another general confiscation, another reign of terror. Four or five such convulsions following each other, at intervals of ten or twelve years, would reduce the most flourishing countries of Europe to the state of Barbary or the Morea.

The civilised part of the world has now nothing to fear from the hostility of savage nations. Once the deluge of barbarism has passed over it, to destroy and to fertilise; and in the present state of mankind we enjoy a full security against that calamity. That flood will no more return to cover the earth. But is it possible that in the bosom of civilisation itself may be engendered the malady which shall destroy it? Is it possible that institutions may be established which, without the help of earthquake, of famine, of pestilence, or of the foreign sword, may undo the work of so many ages of wisdom and glory, and gradually sweep away taste, literature, science, commerce, manufactures, everything but the rude arts necessary to the support of animal life? Is it possible that, in two or three hundred years, a few lean and half-naked fishermen may divide with owls and foxes the ruins of the greatest European cities—may wash their nets amidst the relics of her gigantic docks, and build their huts out of the capitals of her stately cathedrals? If the principles of Mr Mill be sound, we say, without hesitation, that the form of government which he recommends will assuredly produce all this. But, if these principles be unsound, if the reasonings by which we have opposed them be just, the higher and middling orders are the natural representatives of the human race. Their interest may be opposed in some things to that of their poorer contemporaries; but it is identical with that of the innumerable generations which are to follow.

Mr Mill concludes his essay, by answering an objection often made to the project of universal suffrage—that the people do not understand their own interests. We shall not go through his arguments on this subject, because, till he has proved that it is for the interest of the people to respect property, he only makes matters worse by proving that they understand their interests. But we cannot refrain from treating our readers with a delicious *bonne bouche* of wisdom, which he has kept for the last moment.

> "The opinions of that class of the people who are below the middle rank are formed, and their minds are directed, by that intelligent, that virtuous rank, who come the most immediately in contact with them, who are in the constant habit of intimate communication with them, to whom they fly for advice and assistance in all their numerous difficulties, upon whom they feel an immediate and daily dependence in health and in sickness, in infancy and in old age, to whom their children look up as models for their imitation, whose opinions they hear daily repeated, and account it their honour to adopt. There can be no doubt that the middle rank, which gives to science, to art, and to legislation itself their most distinguished ornaments, and is the chief source of all that has exalted and refined human nature, is that portion of the community, of which, if the basis of representation were ever so far extended, the opinion would ultimately decide. Of the people beneath them, a vast majority would be sure to be guided by their advice and example."

This single paragraph is sufficient to upset Mr Mill's theory. Will the people act against their own interest? Or will the middle rank act against its own interest? Or is the interest of the middle rank identical with the interest of the people? If the people act according to the directions of the middle rank, as Mr Mill says that they assuredly will, one of these three questions must be answered in the affirmative. But, if any one of the three be answered in the affirmative, his whole system falls to the ground. If the interest of the middle rank be identical with that of the people, why should not the powers of government be intrusted to that rank? If the powers of government were intrusted to that rank, there would evidently be an aristocracy of wealth; and "to constitute an aristocracy of wealth, though it were a very numerous one, would," according to Mr Mill, "leave the community without protection, and exposed to all the evils of unbridled power." Will not the same motives which induce the middle classes to abuse one kind of power induce them to abuse another? If their interest be the same with that of the people they will govern the people well. If it be opposite to that of the people they will advise the people ill. The system of universal suffrage, therefore, according to Mr Mill's own account, is only a device for doing circuitously what a representative system, with a pretty high qualification, would do directly.

So ends this celebrated Essay. And such is this philosophy for which the experience of three thousand years is to be discarded; this philosophy, the professors of which speak as if it had guided the world to the knowledge of navigation and alphabetical writing; as if, before its dawn, the inhabitants of Europe had lived in caverns and eaten each other! We are sick, it seems, like the children of Israel, of the objects of our old and legitimate worship. We pine for a new idolatry. All that is costly and all that is ornamental in our intellectual treasures must be delivered up, and cast into the furnace—and there comes out this Calf!

Our readers can scarcely mistake our object in writing this article. They will not suspect us of any disposition to advocate the cause of absolute monarchy, or of any narrow form of oligarchy, or to exaggerate the evils of popular government. Our object at present is, not so much to attack or defend any particular system of polity, as to expose the vices of a kind of reasoning utterly unfit for moral and political discussions ; of a kind of reasoning which may so readily be turned to purposes of falsehood that it ought to receive no quarter, even when by accident it may be employed on the side of truth.

Our objection to the essay of Mr Mill is fundamental. We believe that it is utterly impossible to deduce the science of government from the principles of human nature.

What proposition is there respecting human nature which is absolutely and universally true? We know of only one : and that is not only true, but identical ; that men always act from self-interest. This truism the Utilitarians proclaim with as much pride as if it were new, and as much zeal as if it were important. But in fact, when explained, it means only that men, if they can, will do as they choose. When we see the actions of a man we know with certainty what he thinks his interest to be. But it is impossible to reason with certainty from what *we* take to be his interest to his actions. One man goes without a dinner that he may add a shilling to a hundred thousand pounds : another runs in debt to give balls and masquerades. One man cuts his father's throat to get possession of his old clothes : another hazards his own life to save that of an enemy. One man volunteers on a forlorn hope : another is drummed out of a regiment for cowardice. Each of these men has, no doubt, acted from self-interest. But we gain nothing by knowing this, except the pleasure, if it be one, of multiplying useless words. In fact, this principle is just as recondite and just as important as the great truth that whatever is, is. If a philosopher were always to state facts in the following form—"There is a shower : but whatever is, is ; therefore, there is a shower,"—his reasoning would be perfectly sound ; but we do not apprehend that it would materially enlarge the circle of human knowledge. And it is equally idle to attribute any importance to a proposition which, when interpreted means only that a man had rather do what he had rather do.

If the doctrine, that men always act from self-interest, be laid down in any other sense than this—if the meaning of the word self-interest be narrowed so as to exclude any one of the motives which may by possibility act on any human being, the proposition ceases to be identical : but at the same time it ceases to be true.

What we have said of the word "self-interest" applies to all the synonymes and circumlocutions which are employed to convey the same meaning ; pain and pleasure, happiness and misery, objects of desire, and so forth.

The whole art of Mr Mill's essay consists in one simple trick of legerdemain. It consists in using words of the sort which we have been describing first in one sense and then in another. Men will take the objects of their desire if they can. Unquestionably :—but this is an identical proposition : for an object of desire means merely a thing which a man will procure if he can. Nothing can possibly be inferred from a maxim of this kind. When we see a man take something we shall know that it was an object of his desire. But till then we have no means of judging with certainty what he desires or what he will take. The general proposition, however, having been admitted, Mr Mill proceeds to reason as if men had no desires but those which can be gratified only by spoliation and oppression. It then becomes easy to deduce doctrines of vast importance from the original axiom. The only misfortune is, that by thus narrowing the meaning of the word desire the axiom becomes false, and all the doctrines consequent upon it are false likewise.

When we pass beyond those maxims which it is impossible to deny without a contradiction in terms, and which, therefore, do not enable us to advance a single step in practical knowledge, we do not believe that it is possible to lay down a single general rule respecting the motives which influence human actions. There is nothing which may not, by association or by comparison, become an object either of desire or of aversion. The fear of death is generally considered as one of the strongest of our feelings. It is the most formidable sanction which legislators have been able to devise. Yet it is notorious that, as Lord Bacon has observed, there is no passion by which that fear has not been often overcome. Physical pain is indisputably an evil; yet it has been often endured and even welcomed. Innumerable martyrs have exulted in torments which made the spectators shudder: and to use a more homely illustration, there are few wives who do not long to be mothers.

Is the love of approbation a stronger motive than the love of wealth? It is impossible to answer this question generally even in the case of an individual with whom we are very intimate. We often say, indeed, that a man loves fame more than money, or money more than fame. But this is said in a loose and popular sense; for there is scarcely a man who would not endure a few sneers for a great sum of money, if he were in pecuniary distress; and scarcely a man, on the other hand, who, if he were in flourishing circumstances, would expose himself to the hatred and contempt of the public for a trifle. In order, therefore, to return a precise answer even about a single human being, we must know what is the amount of the sacrifice of reputation demanded and of the pecuniary advantage offered, and in what situation the person to whom the temptation is proposed stands at the time. But, when the question is propounded generally about the whole species, the impossibility of answering is still more evident. Man differs from man; generation from generation; nation from nation. Education, station, sex, age, accidental associations, produce infinite shades of variety.

Now, the only mode in which we can conceive it possible to deduce a theory of government from the principles of human nature is this. We must find out what are the motives which, in a particular form of government, impel rulers to bad measures, and what are those which impel them to good measures. We must then compare the effect of the two classes of motives; and according as we find the one or the other to prevail, we must pronounce the form of government in question good or bad.

Now let it be supposed that, in aristocratical and monarchical states, the desire of wealth and other desires of the same class always tend to produce misgovernment, and that the love of approbation and other kindred feelings always tend to produce good government. Then, if it be impossible, as we have shown that it is, to pronounce generally which of the two classes of motives is the more influential, it is impossible to find out, *a priori*, whether a monarchical or aristocratical form of government be good or bad.

Mr Mill has avoided the difficulty of making the comparison, by very coolly putting all the weights into one of the scales,—by reasoning as if no human being had ever sympathised with the feelings, been gratified by the thanks, or been galled by the execrations, of another.

The case, as we have put it, is decisive against Mr Mill, and yet we have put it in a manner far too favourable to him. For, in fact, it is impossible to lay it down as a general rule that the love of wealth in a sovereign always produces misgovernment, or the love of approbation good government. A patient and far-sighted ruler, for example, who is less desirous of raising a great sum immediately than of securing an unencumbered and progressive revenue, will, by taking off restraints from trade and giving perfect security to property, encourage accumulation and entice capital from foreign countries. The commercial policy of Prussia, which is perhaps superior to that of any country in the world, and which puts to shame the absurdities of our republican brethren on the other side of the Atlantic, has probably sprung from the desire of an absolute ruler to enrich himself. On the other hand, when the popular estimate of virtues and vices is erroneous, which is too often the case, the love of approbation leads sovereigns to spend the wealth of the nation on useless shows, or to engage in wanton and destructive wars. If then we can neither compare the strength of two motives, nor determine with certainty to what description of actions either motive will lead, how can we possibly deduce a theory of government from the nature of man?

How, then, are we to arrive at just conclusions on a subject so important to the happiness of mankind? Surely by that method which, in every experimental science to which it has been applied, has signally increased the power and knowledge of our species,—by that method for which our new philosophers would substitute quibbles scarcely worthy of the barbarous respondents and opponents of the middle ages,—by the method of Induction;—by observing the present state of the world,—by assiduously studying the history of past ages,—by sifting the evidence of facts,—by carefully combining and contrasting those which are authentic, —by generalising with judgment and diffidence,—by perpetually bringing the theory which we have constructed to the test of new facts,—by correcting, or altogether abandoning it, according as those new facts prove it to be partially or fundamentally unsound. Proceeding thus,—patiently,—diligently,—candidly,—we may hope to form a system as far inferior in pretension to that which we have been examining and as far superior to it in real utility as the prescriptions of a great physician, varying with every stage of every malady and with the constitution of every patient, to the pill of the advertising quack which is to cure all human beings, in all climates, of all diseases.

This is that noble Science of Politics, which is equally removed from the barren theories of the Utilitarian sophists, and from the petty craft, so often mistaken for statesmanship by minds grown narrow in habits of intrigue, jobbing, and official etiquette;—which of all sciences is the most important to the welfare of nations,—which of all sciences most tends to expand and invigorate the mind,—which draws nutriment and ornament from every part of philosophy and literature, and dispenses in return nutriment and ornament to all. We are sorry and surprised when we see men of good intentions and good natural abilities abandon this healthful and generous study to pore over speculations like those which we have been examining. And we should heartily rejoice to find that our remarks had induced any person of this description to employ, in researches of real utility, the talents and industry which are now wasted on verbal sophisms, wretched of their wretched kind.

As to the greater part of the sect, it is, we apprehend, of little consequence what they study or under whom. It would be more amusing, to be sure, and more reputable, if they would take up the old republican cant and declaim about Brutus and Timoleon, the duty of killing tyrants and the blessedness of dying for liberty. But, on the whole, they might have chosen worse. They may as well be Utilitarians as jockeys or dandies. And, though quibbling about self-interest and motives, and objects of desire, and the greatest happiness of the greatest number, is but a poor employment for a grown man, it certainly hurts the health less than hard drinking, and the fortune less than high play; it is not much more laughable than phrenology, and is immeasurably more humane than cock-fighting.

WESTMINSTER REVIEWER'S DEFENCE OF MILL.

(JUNE 1829.)

Westminster Review, No. XXI., Article XVI. Edinburgh Review No. XCVII., Article on Mill's Essays on Government, &c.

WE have had great reason, we think, to be gratified by the success of our late attack on the Utilitarians. We could publish a long list of the cures which it has wrought in cases previously considered as hopeless. Delicacy forbids us to divulge names; but we cannot refrain from alluding to two remarkable instances. A respectable lady writes to inform us that her son, who was plucked at Cambridge last January, has not been heard to call Sir James Mackintosh a poor ignorant fool more than twice since the appearance of our article. A distinguished political writer in the Westminster and Parliamentary Reviews has borrowed Hume's History, and has actually got as far as the battle of Agincourt. He assures us that he takes great pleasure in his new study, and that he is very impatient to learn how Scotland and England became one kingdom. But the greatest compliment that we have received is that Mr Bentham himself should have condescended to take the field in defence of Mr Mill. We have not been in the habit of reviewing reviews: but, as Mr Bentham is a truly great man, and as his party have thought fit to announce in puffs and placards that this article is written by him, and contains not only an answer to our attacks, but a development of the "greatest happiness principle," with the latest improvements of the author, we shall for once depart from our general rule. However the conflict may terminate, we shall at least not have been vanquished by an ignoble hand.

Of Mr Bentham himself we shall endeavour, even while defending ourselves against his reproaches, to speak with the respect to which his venerable age, his genius, and his public services entitle him. If any harsh expression should escape us, we trust that he will attribute it to inadvertence, to the momentary warmth of controversy,—to anything, in short, rather than to a design of affronting him. Though we have nothing in common with the crew of Hurds and Boswells, who, either from interested motives, or from the habit of intellectual servility and dependence, pamper and vitiate his appetite with the noxious sweetness of their undiscerning praise, we are not perhaps less competent than they to appreciate his merit, or less sincerely disposed to acknowledge it. Though we may sometimes think his reasonings on moral and political questions feeble and sophistical—though we may sometimes smile at his extraordinary language—we can never be weary of admiring the amplitude of his comprehension, the keenness of his penetration, the exuberant fertility with which his mind pours forth arguments and illustrations. However sharply he may speak of us, we can never cease to revere in him the father of the philosophy of Jurisprudence. He has a full right to all the privileges of a great inventor: and, in our court of criticism, those privileges will never be pleaded in vain. But they are limited in the same manner in which, fortunately for the ends of justice, the privileges of the peerage are now limited. The advantage is personal and incommunicable. A nobleman can now no longer cover with his protection every lackey who follows his heels, or every bully who draws in his quarrel: and, highly as we respect the exalted rank which Mr Bentham holds among the writers of our time, yet when, for the due maintenance of literary police, we shall think it necessary to confute sophists, or to bring pretenders to shame, we shall not depart from the ordinary course of our proceedings because the offenders call themselves Benthamites.

Whether Mr Mill has much reason to thank Mr Bentham for undertaking his defence, our readers, when they have finished this article, will perhaps be inclined to doubt. Great as Mr Bentham's talents are, he has, we think, shown an undue confidence in them. He should have considered how dangerous it is for any man, however eloquent and ingenious he may be, to attack or defend a book without reading it: and we feel quite convinced that Mr Bentham would never have written the article before us if he had, before he began, perused our review with attention, and compared it with Mr Mill's Essay.

He has utterly mistaken our object and meaning. He seems to think that we have undertaken to set up some theory of government in opposition to that of Mr Mill. But we distinctly disclaimed any such design. From the beginning to the end of our article, there is not, as far as we remember, a single sentence which, when fairly construed, can be considered as indicating any such design. If such an expression can be found, it has been dropped by inadvertence. Our object was to prove, not that monarchy and aristocracy are good, but that Mr Mill had not proved them to be bad; not that democracy is bad, but that Mr Mill had not proved it to be good. The points in issue are these: whether the famous Essay on Government be, as it has been called, a perfect solution of the great political problem, or a series of sophisms and blunders; and whether the sect which, while it glories in the precision of its logic, extols this Essay as a masterpiece of demonstration be a sect deserving of the respect or of the derision of mankind. These, we say, are the issues; and on these we with full confidence put ourselves on the country.

It is not necessary, for the purposes of this investigation, that we should state what our political creed is, or whether we have any political creed at all. A man who cannot act the most trivial part in a farce has a right to hiss Romeo Coates: a man who does not know a vein from an artery may caution a simple neighbour against the advertisements of Dr Eady. A complete theory of government would indeed be a noble present to mankind; but it is a present which we do not hope and do not pretend that we can offer. If, however, we cannot lay the foundation, it is something to clear away the rubbish; if we cannot set up truth, it is something to pull down error. Even if the subjects of which the Utilitarians treat were subjects of less fearful importance, we should think it no small service to the cause of good sense and good taste to point out the contrast between their magnificent pretensions and their miserable performances. Some of them have, however, thought fit to display their ingenuity on questions of the most momentous kind, and on questions concerning which men cannot reason ill with impunity. We think it, under these circumstances, an absolute duty to expose the fallacy of their arguments. It is no matter of pride or of pleasure. To read their works is the most soporific employment that we know; and a man ought no more to be proud of refuting them than of having two legs. We must now come to close quarters with Mr Bentham, whom, we need not say, we do not mean to include in this observation. He charges us with maintaining,—

> "First, 'That it is not true that all despots govern ill;'—whereon the world is in a mistake, and the Whigs have the true light. And for proof, principally,—that the King of Denmark is not Caligula. To which the answer is, that the King of Denmark is not a despot. He was put in his present situation by the people turning the scale in his favour in a balanced contest between himself and the nobility. And it is quite clear that the same power would turn the scale the other way the moment a King of Denmark should take into his head to be Caligula. It is of little consequence by what congeries of letters the Majesty of Denmark is typified in the royal press of Copenhagen, while the real fact is that the sword of the people is suspended over his head, in case of ill-behaviour, as effectually as in other countries where more noise is made upon the subject. Everybody believes the sovereign of Denmark to be a good and virtuous gentleman; but there is no more superhuman merit in his being so than in the case of a rural squire who does not shoot his land-steward or quarter his wife with his yeomanry sabre.
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> "It is true that there are partial exceptions to the rule, that all men use power as badly as they dare. There may have been such things as amiable negro-drivers and sentimental masters of press-gangs; and here and there, among the odd freaks of human nature, there may have been specimens of men who were 'No tyrants, though bred up to tyranny.' But it would be as wise to recommend wolves for nurses at the Foundling on the credit of Romulus and Remus as to substitute the exception for the general fact, and advise mankind to take to trusting to arbitrary power on the credit of these specimens."

Now, in the first place, we never cited the case of Denmark to prove that all despots do not govern ill. We cited it to prove that Mr Mill did not know how to reason. Mr Mill gave it as a reason for deducing the theory of government from the general laws of human nature that the King of Denmark was not Caligula. This we said, and we still say, was absurd.

In the second place, it was not we, but Mr Mill, who said that the King of Denmark was a despot. His words are these:—"The people of Denmark, tired out with the oppression of an aristocracy, resolved that their king should be absolute; and under their absolute monarch are as well governed as any people in Europe." We leave Mr Bentham to settle with Mr Mill the distinction between a despot and an absolute king.

In the third place, Mr Bentham says that there was in Denmark a balanced contest between the king and the nobility. We find some difficulty in believing that Mr Bentham seriously means to say this, when we consider that Mr Mill has demonstrated the chance to be as infinity to one against the existence of such a balanced contest.

Fourthly, Mr Bentham says that in this balanced contest the people turned the scale in favour of the king against the aristocracy. But Mr Mill has demonstrated that it cannot possibly be for the interest of the monarchy and democracy to join against the aristocracy; and that wherever the three parties exist, the king and the aristocracy will combine against the people. This, Mr Mill assures us, is as certain as anything which depends upon human will.

Fifthly, Mr Bentham says that, if the King of Denmark were to oppress his people, the people and nobles would combine against the king. But Mr Mill has proved that it can never be for the interest of the aristocracy to combine with the democracy against the king. It is evidently Mr Bentham's opinion, that "monarchy, aristocracy, and democracy may balance each other, and by mutual checks produce good government." But this is the very theory which Mr Mill pronounces to be the wildest, the most visionary, the most chimerical ever broached on the subject of government.

We have no dispute on these heads with Mr Bentham. On the contrary, we think his explanation true—or at least, true in part; and we heartily thank him for lending us his assistance to demolish the essay of his follower. His wit and his sarcasm are sport to us; but they are death to his unhappy disciple.

Mr Bentham seems to imagine that we have said something implying an opinion favourable to despotism. We can scarcely suppose that, as he has not condescended to read that portion of our work which he undertook to answer, he can have bestowed much attention on its general character. Had he done so he would, we think, scarcely have entertained such a suspicion. Mr Mill asserts, and pretends to prove, that under no despotic government does any human being, except the tools of the sovereign, possess more than the necessaries of life, and that the most intense degree of terror is kept up by constant cruelty. This, we say, is untrue. It is not merely a rule to which there are exceptions: but it is not the rule. Despotism is bad; but it is scarcely anywhere so bad as Mr Mill says that it is everywhere. This we are sure Mr Bentham will allow. If a man were to say that five hundred thousand people die every year in London of dram-drinking, he would not assert a proposition more monstrously false than Mr Mill's. Would it be just to charge us with defending intoxication because we might say that such a man was grossly in the wrong?

We say with Mr Bentham that despotism is a bad thing. We say with Mr Bentham that the exceptions do not destroy the authority of the rule. But this we say—that a single exception overthrows an argument which either does not prove the rule at all, or else proves the rule to be *true without exceptions;* and such an argument is Mr Mill's argument against despotism. In this respect there is a great difference between rules drawn from experience and rules deduced *a priori*. We might believe that there had been a fall of snow last August, and yet not think it likely that there would be snow next August. A single occurrence opposed to our general experience would tell for very little in our calculation of the chances. But, if we could once satisfy ourselves that in *any* single right-angled triangle the square of the hypothenuse might be less than the squares of the sides, we must reject the forty-seventh proposition of Euclid altogether. We willingly adopt Mr Bentham's lively illustration about the wolf; and we will say in passing that it gives us real pleasure to see how little old age has diminished the gaiety of this eminent man. We can assure him that his merriment gives us far more pleasure on his account than pain on our own. We say with him, Keep the wolf out of the nursery, in spite of the story of Romulus and Remus. But, if the shepherd who saw the wolf licking and suckling those famous twins were, after telling this story to his companions, to assert that it was an infallible rule that no wolf ever had spared, or ever would spare, any living thing which might fall in its way—that its nature was carnivorous—and that it could not possibly disobey its nature, we think that the hearers might have been excused for staring. It may be strange, but is not inconsistent, that a wolf which has eaten ninety-nine children should spare the hundredth. But the fact that a wolf has once spared a child is sufficient to show that there must be some flaw in the chain of reasoning purporting to prove that wolves cannot possibly spare children.

Mr Bentham proceeds to attack another position which he conceives us to maintain :—

> "Secondly, That a government not under the control of the community (for there is no question upon any other) '*may soon be saturated.*' Tell it not in Bow Street, whisper it not in Hatton Garden,—that there is a plan for preventing injustice by 'saturation.' With what peals of unearthly merriment would Minos, Æacus, and Rhadamanthus be aroused upon their benches, if the 'light wings of saffron and of blue' should bear this theory into their grim domains ! Why do not the owners of pocket-handkerchiefs try to 'saturate ?' Why does not the cheated publican beg leave to check the gulosity of his defrauder with a *repetatur haustus*, and the pummelled plaintiff neutralise the malice of his adversary, by requesting to have the rest of the beating in presence of the court,—if it is not that such conduct would run counter to all the conclusions of experience, and be the procreation of the mischief it affected to destroy ? Woful is the man whose wealth depends on his having more than somebody else can be persuaded to take from him ; and woful also is the people that is in such a case !"

Now this is certainly very pleasant writing : but there is no great difficulty in answering the argument. The real reason which makes it absurd to think of preventing theft by pensioning off thieves is this, that there is no limit to the number of thieves. If there were only a hundred thieves in a place, and we were quite sure that no person not already addicted to theft would take to it, it might become a question whether to keep the thieves from dishonesty by raising them above distress would not be a better course than to employ officers against them. But the actual cases are not parallel. Every man who chooses can become a thief; but a man cannot become a king or a member of the aristocracy whenever he chooses. The number of the depredators is limited ; and therefore the amount of depredation, so far as physical pleasures are concerned, must be limited also. Now, we made the remark which Mr Bentham censures with reference to physical pleasures only. The pleasures of ostentation, of taste, of revenge, and other pleasures of the same description, have, we distinctly allowed, no limit. Our words are these :—"A king or an aristocracy may be supplied to satiety with *corporal pleasures*, at an expense which the rudest and poorest community would scarcely feel." Does Mr Bentham deny this ? If he does, we leave him to Mr Mill. "What," says that philosopher, in his Essay on Education, "what are the ordinary pursuits of wealth and power, which kindle to such a height the ardour of mankind ? Not the mere love of eating and of drinking, or all the physical objects together which wealth can purchase or power command. With these every man is in the long run speedily satisfied." What the difference is between being speedily satisfied and being soon saturated, we leave Mr Bentham and Mr Mill to settle together.

The word "saturation," however, seems to provoke Mr Bentham's mirth. It certainly did not strike us as very pure English; but, as Mr Mill used it, we supposed it to be good Benthamese. With the latter language we are not critically acquainted, though, as it has many roots in common with our mother tongue, we can contrive, by the help of a converted Utilitarian, who attends us in the capacity of Moonshee, to make out a little. But Mr Bentham's authority is of course decisive; and we bow to it.

Mr Bentham next represents us as maintaining:—

> "Thirdly, That 'though there may be some tastes and propensities that have no point of saturation, there exists a sufficient check in the desire of the good opinion of others.' The misfortune of this argument is, that no man cares for the good opinion of those he has been accustomed to wrong, If oysters have opinions, it is probable they think very ill of those who eat them in August; but small is the effect upon the autumnal glutton that engulfs their gentle substances within his own. The planter and the slave-driver care just as much about negro opinion, as the epicure about the sentiments of oysters. M. Ude throwing live eels into the fire as a kindly method of divesting them of the unsavoury oil that lodges beneath their skins, is not more convinced of the immense aggregate of good which arises to the lordlier parts of the creation, than is the gentle peer who strips his fellow man of country and of family for a wild-fowl slain. The goodly landowner, who lives by morsels squeezed indiscriminately from the waxy hands of the cobbler and the polluted ones of the nightman, is in no small degree the object of both hatred and contempt; but it is to be feared that he is a long way from feeling them to be intolerable. The principle of '*At mihi plaudo ipse domi, simul ac nummos contemplor in arcâ*,' is sufficient to make a wide interval between the opinions of the plaintiff and defendant in such cases. In short, to banish law and leave all plaintiffs to trust to the desire of reputation on the opposite side, would only be transporting the theory of the Whigs from the House of Commons to Westminster Hall."

Now, in the first place, we never maintained the proposition which Mr Bentham puts into our mouths. We said, and say, that there is a *certain* check to the rapacity and cruelty of men, in their desire of the good opinion of others. We never said that it was sufficient. Let Mr Mill show it to be insufficient. It is enough for us to prove that there is a set-off against the principle from which Mr Mill deduces the whole theory of government. The balance may be, and, we believe, will be, against despotism and the narrower forms of aristocracy. But what is this to the correctness or incorrectness of Mr Mill's accounts? The question is not, whether the motives which lead rulers to behave ill are stronger than those which lead them to behave well;—but, whether we ought to form a theory of government by looking *only* at the motives which lead rulers to behave ill and never noticing those which lead them to behave well.

Absolute rulers, says Mr Bentham, do not care for the good opinion of their subjects; for no man cares for the good opinion of those whom he has been accustomed to wrong. By Mr Bentham's leave, this is a plain begging of the question. The point at issue is this:—Will kings and nobles wrong the people? The argument in favour of kings and nobles is this:—they will not wrong the people, because they care for the good opinion of the people. But this argument Mr Bentham meets thus:—they will not care for the good opinion of the people, because they are accustomed to wrong the people.

Here Mr Mill differs, as usual, from Mr Bentham. "The greatest princes," says he, in his Essay on Education, "the most despotical masters of human destiny, when asked what they aim at by their wars and conquests, would answer, if sincere, as Frederick of Prussia answered, *pour faire parler de soi;*—to occupy a large space in the admiration of mankind." Putting Mr Mill's and Mr Bentham's principles together, we might make out very easily that "the greatest princes, the most despotical masters of human destiny," would never abuse their power.

A man who has been long accustomed to injure people must also have been long accustomed to do without their love, and to endure their aversion. Such a man may not miss the pleasure of popularity; for men seldom miss a pleasure which they have long denied themselves. An old tyrant does without popularity just as an old water-drinker does without wine. But, though it is perfectly true that men who for the good of their health have long abstained from wine feel the want of it very little, it would be absurd to infer that men will always abstain from wine when their health requires that they should do so. And it would be equally absurd to say, because men who have been accustomed to oppress care little for popularity, that men will therefore necessarily prefer the pleasures of oppression to those of popularity.

Then, again, a man may be accustomed to wrong people in one point and not in another. He may care for their good opinion with regard to one point and not with regard to another. The Regent Orleans laughed at charges of impiety, libertinism, extravagance, idleness, disgraceful promotions. But the slightest allusion to the charge of poisoning threw him into convulsions. Louis the Fifteenth braved the hatred and contempt of his subjects during many years of the most odious and imbecile misgovernment. But, when a report was spread that he used human blood for his baths, he was almost driven mad by it. Surely Mr Bentham's position "that no man cares for the good opinion of those whom he has been accustomed to wrong" would be objectionable, as far too sweeping and indiscriminate, even if it did not involve, as in the present case we have shown that it does, a direct begging of the question at issue.

Mr Bentham proceeds:—

> "Fourthly, The Edinburgh Reviewers are of opinion, that 'it might, with no small plausibility, be maintained, that in many countries, there are two classes which, in some degree, answer to this description;' [viz.] 'that the poor compose the class which government is established to restrain; and the people of some property the class to which the powers of government may without danger be confided.'
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> "They take great pains, it is true, to say this and not to say it. They shuffle and creep about, to secure a hole to escape at, if 'what they do not assert' should be found in any degree inconvenient. A man might waste his life in trying to find out whether the Misses of the *Edinburgh* mean to say Yes or No in their political coquetry. But whichever way the lovely spinsters may decide, it is diametrically opposed to history and the evidence of facts, that the poor *are* the class whom there is any difficulty in restraining. It is not the poor but the rich that have a

propensity to take the property of other people. There is no instance upon earth of the poor having combined to take away the property of the rich; and all the instances habitually brought forward in support of it are gross misrepresentations, founded upon the most necessary acts of self-defence on the part of the most numerous classes. Such a misrepresentation is the common one of the Agrarian law; which was nothing but an attempt on the part of the Roman people to get back some part of what had been taken from them by undisguised robbery. Such another is the stock example of the French Revolution, appealed to by the *Edinburgh Review* in the actual case. It is utterly untrue that the French Revolution took place because 'the poor began to compare their cottages and salads with the hotels and banquets of the rich;' it took place because they were robbed of their cottages and salads to support the hotels and banquets of their oppressors. It is utterly untrue that there was either a scramble for property or a general confiscation; the classes who took part with the foreign invaders lost their property, as they would have done here, and ought to do everywhere. All these are the vulgar errors of the man on the lion's back,—which the lion will set to rights when he can tell his own story. History is nothing but the relation of the sufferings of the poor from the rich; except precisely so far as the numerous classes of the community have contrived to keep the virtual power in their hands, or, in other words, to establish free governments. If a poor man injures the rich, the law is instantly at his heels; the injuries of the rich towards the poor are always inflicted *by* the law. And to enable the rich to do this to any extent that may be practicable or prudent, there is clearly one postulate required, which is, that the rich shall make the law."

This passage is alone sufficient to prove that Mr Bentham has not taken the trouble to read our article from beginning to end. We are quite sure that he would not stoop to misrepresent it. And, if he had read it with any attention, he would have perceived that all this coquetry, this hesitation, this Yes and No, this saying and not saying, is simply an exercise of the undeniable right which in controversy belongs to the defensive side—to the side which proposes to establish nothing. The affirmative of the issue and the burden of the proof are with Mr Mill, not with us. We are not bound, perhaps we are not able, to show that the form of government which he recommends is bad. It is quite enough if we can show that he does not prove it to be good. In his proof, among many other flaws, is this—He says, that if men are not inclined to plunder each other, government is unnecessary, and that, if men are so inclined, kings and aristocracies will plunder the people. Now, this we say, is a fallacy. That *some* men will plunder their neighbours if they can, is a sufficient reason for the existence of governments. But it is not demonstrated that kings and aristocracies will plunder the people, unless it be true that *all* men will plunder their neighbours, if they can. Men are placed in very different situations. Some have all the bodily pleasures that they desire, and many other pleasures besides, without plundering anybody. Others can scarcely obtain their daily bread without plundering. It may be true, but surely it is not self-evident, that the former class is under as strong temptations to plunder as the latter. Mr Mill was therefore bound to prove it. That he has not proved it is one of thirty or forty fatal errors in his argument. It is not necessary that we should express an opinion or even have an opinion on the subject.

Perhaps we are in a state of perfect scepticism: but what then? Are we the theorymakers? When we bring before the world a theory of government, it will be time to call upon us to offer proof at every step. At present we stand on our undoubted logical right. We concede nothing; and we deny nothing. We say to the Utilitarian theorists:—When you prove your doctrine, we will believe it; and, till you prove it, we will not believe it.

Mr Bentham has quite misunderstood what we said about the French Revolution. We never alluded to that event for the purpose of proving that the poor were inclined to rob the rich. Mr Mill's principles of human nature furnished us with that part of our argument ready-made. We alluded to the French Revolution for the purpose of illustrating the effects which general spoliation produces on society, not for the purpose of showing that general spoliation will take place under a democracy. We allowed distinctly that, in the peculiar circumstances of the French monarchy, the Revolution, though accompanied by a great shock to the institution of property, was a blessing. Surely Mr Bentham will not maintain that the injury produced by the deluge of assignats and by the maximum fell only on the emigrants,—or that there were not many emigrants who would have stayed and lived peaceably under any government if their persons and property had been secure.

We never said that the French Revolution took place because the poor began to compare their cottages and salads with the hotels and banquets of the rich. We were not speaking about *the causes* of the Revolution, or thinking about them. This we said, and say, that, if a democratic government had been established in France, the poor, when they began to compare their cottages and salads with the hotels and banquets of the rich, would, on the supposition that Mr Mill's principles are sound, have plundered the rich, and repeated without provocation all the severities and confiscations which at the time of the Revolution, were committed with provocation. We say that Mr Mill's favourite form of government would, if his own views of human nature be just, make those violent convulsions and transfers of property which now rarely happen, except, as in the case of the French Revolution, when the people are maddened by oppression, events of annual or biennial occurrence. We gave no opinion of our own. We give none now. We say that this proposition may be proved from Mr Mill's own premises, by steps strictly analogous to those by which he proves monarchy and aristocracy to be bad forms of government. To say this, is not to say that the proposition is true. For we hold both Mr Mill's premises and his deduction to be unsound throughout.

Mr Bentham challenges us to prove from history that the people will plunder the rich. What does history say to Mr Mill's doctrine, that absolute kings will always plunder their subjects so unmercifully as to leave nothing but a bare subsistence to any except their own creatures? If experience is to be the test, Mr Mill's theory is unsound. If Mr Mill's reasoning *a priori* be sound, the people in a democracy will plunder the rich. Let us use one weight and one measure. Let us not throw history aside when we are proving a theory, and take it up again when we have to refute an objection founded on the principles of that theory.

We have not done, however, with Mr Bentham's charges against us.

"Among other specimens of their ingenuity, they think they embarrass the subject by asking why, on the principles in question, women should not have votes as well as men. *And why not?*

'Gentle shepherd, tell me why?'—

If the mode of election was what it ought to be, there would be no more difficulty in women voting for a representative in Parliament than for a director at the India House. The world will find out at some time that the readiest way to secure justice on some points is to be just on all:—that the whole is easier to accomplish than the part; and that, whenever the camel is driven through the eye of the needle, it would be simple folly and debility that would leave a hoof behind."

Why, says or sings Mr Bentham, should not women vote? It may seem uncivil in us to turn a deaf ear to his Arcadian warblings. But we submit, with great deference, that it is not *our* business to tell him why. We fully agree with him that the principle of female suffrage is not so palpably absurd that a chain of reasoning ought to be pronounced unsound merely because it leads to female suffrage. We say that every argument which tells in favour of the universal suffrage of the males tells equally in favour of female suffrage. Mr Mill, however, wishes to see all men vote, but says that it is unnecessary that women should vote; and for making this distinction *he* gives as a reason an assertion which, in the first place, is not true, and which, in the next place, would, if true, overset his whole theory of human nature; namely, that the interest of the women is identical with that of the men. We side with Mr Bentham, so far, at least, as this: that, when we join to drive the camel through the needle, he shall go through hoof and all. We at present desire to be excused from driving the camel. It is Mr Mill who leaves the hoof behind. But we should think it uncourteous to reproach him in the language which Mr Bentham, in the exercise of his paternal authority over the sect, thinks himself entitled to employ.

"Another of their perverted ingenuities is, that 'they are rather inclined to think,' that it would, on the whole, be for the interest of the majority to plunder the rich; and if so, the Utilitarians will say that the rich *ought* to be plundered. On which it is sufficient to reply, that for the majority to plunder the rich would amount to a declaration that nobody should be rich; which, as all men wish to be rich, would involve a suicide of hope. And as nobody has shown a fragment of reason why such a proceeding should be for the general happiness, it does not follow that the 'Utilitarians' would recommend it. The Edinburgh Reviewers have a waiting gentlewoman's ideas of 'Utilitarianism.' It is unsupported by anything but the pitiable 'We are rather inclined to think'—and is utterly contradicted by the whole course of history and human experience besides,—that there is either danger or possibility of such a consummation as the majority agreeing on the plunder of the rich. There have been instances in human memory, of their agreeing to plunder rich oppressors, rich traitors, rich enemies,—but the rich *simpliciter* never. It is as true now as in the days of Harrington that 'a people never will, nor ever can, never did, nor ever shall, take up arms for levelling.' All the commotions in the world have been for something else; and 'levelling' is brought forward as the blind to conceal what the other was."

We say, again and again, that we are on the defensive. We do not think it necessary to prove that a quack medicine is poison. Let the vendor prove it to be sanative. We do not pretend to show that universal suffrage is an evil. Let its advocates show it to be a good. Mr Mill tells us that, if power be given for short terms to representatives elected by all the males of mature age, it will then be for the interest of those representatives to promote the greatest happiness of the greatest number. To prove this, it is necessary that he should prove three propositions: first, that the interest of such a representative body will be identical with the interest of the constituent body; secondly, that the interest of the constituent body will be identical with that of the community; thirdly, that the interest of one generation of a community is identical with that of all succeeding generations. The two first propositions Mr Mill attempts to prove and fails. The last he does not even attempt to prove. We therefore refuse our assent to his conclusions. Is this unreasonable?

We never even dreamed, what Mr Bentham conceives us to have maintained, that it could be for the greatest happiness of *mankind* to plunder the rich. But we are "rather inclined to think," though doubtingly and with a disposition to yield to conviction, that it may be for the pecuniary interest of the majority of a single generation in a thickly-peopled country to plunder the rich. Why we are inclined to think so we will explain, whenever we send a theory of government to an Encyclopædia. At present we are bound to say only that we think so, and shall think so till somebody shows us a reason for thinking otherwise.

Mr Bentham's answer to us is simple assertion. He must not think that we mean any discourtesy by meeting it with a simple denial. The fact is, that almost all the governments that have ever existed in the civilised world have been, in part at least, monarchical and aristocratical. The first government constituted on principles approaching to those which the Utilitarians hold was, we think, that of the United States. That the poor have never combined to plunder the rich in the governments of the old world, no more proves that they might not combine to plunder the rich under a system of universal suffrage, than the fact that the English kings of the House of Brunswick have not been Neros and Domitians proves that sovereigns may safely be intrusted with absolute power. Of what the people would do in a state of perfect sovereignty we can judge only by indications, which, though rarely of much moment in themselves, and though always suppressed with little difficulty, are yet of great significance, and resemble those by which our domestic animals sometimes remind us that they are of kin with the fiercest monsters of the forest. It would not be wise to reason from the behaviour of a dog crouching under the lash, which is the case of the Italian people, or from the behaviour of a dog pampered with the best morsels of a plentiful kitchen, which is the case of the people of America, to the behaviour of a wolf, which is nothing but a dog run wild, after a week's fast among the snows of the Pyrenees. No commotion, says Mr Bentham, was ever really produced by the wish of levelling; the wish has been put forward as a blind; but something else has been the real object. Grant all this. But why has levelling been put forward as a blind in times of commotion to conceal the real objects of the agitators? Is it with declarations which involve "a suicide of hope" that men attempt to allure others? Was famine, pestilence, slavery, ever held out to attract the people? If levelling has been made a pretence for disturbances, the argument against Mr Bentham's doctrine is as strong as if it had been the real object of disturbances.

But the great objection which Mr Bentham makes to our review, still remains to be noticed :—

"The pith of the charge against the author of the Essays is, that he has written 'an elaborate Treatise on Government,' and 'deduced the whole science from the assumption of certain propensities of human nature.' Now, in the name of Sir Richard Birnie and all saints, from what else *should* it be deduced? What did ever anybody imagine to be the end, object, and design of government *as it ought to be* but the same operation, on an extended scale, which that meritorious chief magistrate conducts on a limited one at Bow Street ; to wit, the preventing one man from injuring another? Imagine, then, that the Whiggery of Bow Street were to rise up against the proposition that their science was to be deduced from 'certain propensities of human nature,' and thereon were to ratiocinate as follows :—

"'How then are we to arrive at just conclusions on a subject so important to the happiness of mankind? Surely by that method, which, in every experimental science to which it has been applied, has signally increased the power and knowledge of our species,—by that method for which our new philosophers would substitute quibbles scarcely worthy of the barbarous respondents and opponents of the middle ages,—by the method of induction,—by observing the present state of the world,—by assiduously studying the history of past ages,—by sifting the evidence of facts,—by carefully combining and contrasting those which are authentic,—by generalising with judgment and diffidence,—by perpetually bringing the theory which we have constructed to the test of new facts,—by correcting, or altogether abandoning it, according as those new facts prove it to be partially or fundamentally unsound. Proceeding thus,—patiently, diligently, candidly, we may hope to form a system as far inferior in pretension to that which we have been examining, and as far superior to it in real utility, as the prescriptions of a great physician, varying with every stage of every malady, and with the constitution of every patient, to the pill of the advertising quack, which is to cure all human beings, in all climates, of all diseases.'"

"Fancy now,—only fancy,—the delivery of these wise words at Bow Street ; and think how speedily the practical catchpolls would reply, that all this might be very fine, but, as far as they had studied history, the naked story was, after all, that numbers of men had a propensity to thieving, and their business was to catch them ; that they, too, had been sifters of facts ; and, to say the truth, their simple opinion was, that their brethren of the red waistcoat—though they should be sorry to think ill of any man—had somehow contracted a leaning to the other side, and were more bent on puzzling the case for the benefit of the defendants, than on doing the duty of good officers and true. Such would, beyond all doubt, be the sentence passed on such trimmers in the microcosm of Bow Street. It might not absolutely follow that they were in a plot to rob the goldsmiths' shops, or to set fire to the House of Commons ; but it would be quite clear that they had got *a feeling*,—that they were in process of siding with the thieves,—and that it was not to them that any man must look who was anxious that pantries should be safe."

This is all very witty ; but it does not touch us. On the present occasion, we cannot but flatter ourselves that we bear a much greater resemblance to a practical catchpoll than either Mr Mill or Mr Bentham. It would, to be sure, be very absurd in a magistrate discussing the arrangements of a police-office, to spout in the style either of our article or Mr Bentham's ; but, in substance, he would proceed, if he were a man of sense, exactly as *we* recommend. He would, on being appointed to provide for the security of property in a town, study attentively the state of the town. He would learn at what places, at what times, and under what circumstances, theft and outrage were most frequent. Are the streets, he would ask, most infested with thieves at sunset or at midnight? Are there any public places of resort which give peculiar facilities to pickpockets? Are there any districts completely inhabited by a lawless population? Which are the flash houses, and which the shops of receivers? Having made himself master of the facts, he would act accordingly. A strong detachment of officers might be necessary for Petticoat Lane ; another for the pit entrance of Covent Garden Theatre. Grosvenor Square and Hamilton Place would require little or no protection. Exactly thus should we reason about government. Lombardy is oppressed by tyrants ; and constitutional checks, such as may produce security to the people, are required. It is, so to speak, one of the resorts of thieves ; and there is great need of police-officers. Denmark resembles one of those respectable streets in which it is scarcely necessary to station a catchpoll, because the inhabitants would at once join to seize a thief. Yet, even in such a street, we should wish to see an officer appear now and then, as his occasional superintendence would render the security more complete. And even Denmark, we think, would be better off under a constitutional form of government.

Mr Mill proceeds like a director of police, who, without asking a single question about the state of his district, should give his orders thus :—"My maxim is, that every man will take what he can. Every man in London would be a thief, but for the thieftakers. This is an undeniable principle of human nature. Some of my predecessors have wasted their time in inquiring about particular pawnbrokers, and particular alehouses. Experience is altogether divided. Of people placed in exactly the same situation, I see that one steals, and that another would sooner burn his hand off. *Therefore* I trust to the laws of human nature alone, and pronounce all men thieves alike. Let everybody, high and low, be watched. Let Townsend take particular care that the Duke of Wellington does not steal the silk handkerchief of the lord in waiting at the levee. A person has lost a watch. Go to Lord Fitzwilliam and search him for it ; he is as great a receiver of stolen goods as Ikey Solomons himself. Don't tell me about his rank, and character, and fortune. He is a man ; and a man does not change his nature when he is called a lord.* Either men will steal or they will not steal. If they will not, why do I sit here? If they will, his lordship must be a thief." The Whiggery of Bow Street would perhaps rise up against this wisdom. Would Mr Bentham think that the Whiggery of Bow Street was in the wrong?

We blamed Mr Mill for deducing his theory of government from the principles of human nature. "In the name of Sir Richard Birnie and all saints," cries Mr Bentham, "from what else should it be deduced?" In spite of this solemn adjuration, we shall venture to answer Mr Bentham's question by another. How does he arrive at those principles of human nature from which he proposes to deduce the science of government? We think that we may venture to put an answer into his mouth; for in truth there is but one possible answer. He will say—By experience. But what is the extent of this experience? Is it an experience which includes experience of the conduct of men intrusted with the powers of government; or is it exclusive of that experience? If it includes experience of the manner in which men act when intrusted with the powers of government, then those principles of human nature from which the science of government is to be deduced can only be known after going through that inductive process by which we propose to arrive at the science of government. Our knowledge of human nature, instead of being prior in order to our knowledge of the science of government, will be posterior to it. And it would be correct to say, that by means of the science of government, and of other kindred sciences—the science of education, for example, which falls under exactly the same principle—we arrive at the science of human nature.

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* "If Government is founded upon this, as a law of human nature, that a man, if able, will take from others anything which they have and he desires, it is sufficiently evident that when a man is called a king, he does not change his nature so that, when he has power to take what he pleases, he will take what he pleases. To suppose that he will not, is to affirm that government is unnecessary and that human beings will abstain from injuring one another of their own accord."—MILL *on Government.*

If, on the other hand, we are to deduce the theory of government from principles of human nature, in arriving at which principles we have not taken into the account the manner in which men act when invested with the powers of government, then those principles must be defective. They have not been formed by a sufficiently copious induction. We are reasoning, from what a man does in one situation, to what he will do in another. Sometimes we may be quite justified in reasoning thus. When we have no means of acquiring information about the particular case before us, we are compelled to resort to cases which bear some resemblance to it. But the more satisfactory course is to obtain information about the particular case; and, whenever this can be obtained, it ought to be obtained. When first the yellow fever broke out, a physician might be justified in treating it as he had been accustomed to treat those complaints which, on the whole, had the most symptoms in common with it. But what should we think of a physician who should now tell us that he deduced his treatment of yellow fever from the general theory of pathology? Surely we should ask him, Whether, in constructing his theory of pathology, he had or had not taken into the account the facts which had been ascertained respecting the yellow fever? If he had, then it would be more correct to say that he had arrived at the principles of pathology partly by his experience of cases of yellow fever than that he had deduced his treatment of yellow fever from the principles of pathology. If he had not, he should not prescribe for us. If we had the yellow fever, we should prefer a man who had never treated any cases but cases of yellow fever to a man who had walked the hospitals of London and Paris for years, but who knew nothing of our particular disease.

Let Lord Bacon speak for us: "Inductionem censemus eam esse demonstrandi formam, quæ sensum tuetur, et naturam premit, et operibus imminet, ac fere immiscetur. Itaque ordo quoque demonstrandi plane invertitur. Adhuc enim res ita geri consuevit, ut a sensu et particularibus primo loco ad maxime generalia advoletur, tanquam ad polos fixos, circa quos disputationes vertantur; ab illis cætera, per media, deriventur; viâ certe compendiariâ, sed præcipiti, et ad naturam perviâ, ad disputationes proclivi et accommodatâ. At, secundum nos, axiomata continenter et gradatim excitantur, ut non, nisi postremo loco, ad maxime generalia veniatur." Can any words more exactly describe the political reasonings of Mr Mill than those in which Lord Bacon thus describes the logomachies of the schoolmen? Mr Mill springs at once to a general principle of the widest extent, and from that general principle deduces syllogistically every thing which is included in it. We say with Bacon—"non, nisi postremo loco, ad maxime generalia veniatur." In the present inquiry, the science of human nature is the "maxime generale." To this the Utilitarian rushes at once, and from this he deduces a hundred sciences. But the true philosopher, the inductive reasoner, travels up to it slowly, through those hundred sciences, of which the science of government is one.

As we have lying before us that incomparable volume, the noblest and most useful of all the works of the human reason, the Novum Organum, we will transcribe a few lines, in which the Utilitarian philosophy is portrayed to the life.

> "Syllogismus ad *Principia* scientiarum non adhibetur, ad media axiomata frustra adhibetur, cum sit subtilitati naturæ longe impar. Assensum itaque constringit, non res. Syllogismus ex propositionibus constat, propositiones ex verbis, verba notionum tesseræ sunt. Itaque si notiones ipsæ, id quod basis rei est, confusæ sint, et tenerè a rebus abstractæ, nihil in iis quæ superstruuntur est firmitudinis. Itaque spes est una in Inductione vera. In notionibus nil sani est, nec in Logicis nec in physicis. Non substantia, non qualitas, agere, pati, ipsum esse, bonæ notiones sunt; multo minus grave, leve, densum, tenue, humidum, siccum, generatio, corruptio, attrahere, fugare, elementum, materia, forma, et id genus, sed omnes phantasticæ et male terminatæ."

Substitute for the "substantia," the "generatio," the "corruptio," the "elementum," the "materia," of the old schoolmen, Mr Mill's pain, pleasure, interest, power, objects of desire,—and the words of Bacon will seem to suit the current year as well as the beginning of the seventeenth century.

We have now gone through the objections that Mr Bentham makes to our article: and we submit ourselves on all the charges to the judgment of the public.

The rest of Mr Bentham's article consists of an exposition of the Utilitarian principle, or, as he decrees that it shall be called, the "greatest happiness principle." He seems to think that we have been assailing it. We never said a syllable against it. We spoke slightingly of the Utilitarian sect, as we thought of them, and think of them; but it was not for holding this doctrine that we blamed them. In attacking them we no more meant to attack the "greatest happiness principle" than when we say that Mahometanism is a false religion we mean to deny the unity of God, which is the first article of the Mahometan creed;—no more than Mr Bentham, when he sneers at the Whigs means to blame them for denying the divine right of kings. We reasoned throughout our article on the supposition that the end of government was to produce the greatest happiness to mankind.

Mr Bentham gives an account of the manner in which he arrived at the discovery of the "greatest happiness principle." He then proceeds to describe the effects which, as he conceives, that discovery is producing in language so rhetorical and ardent that, if it had been written by any other person, a genuine Utilitarian would certainly have thrown down the book in disgust.

> "The only rivals of any note to the new principle which were brought forward, were those known by the names of the 'moral sense,' and the 'original contract.' The new principle superseded the first of these, by

presenting it with a guide for its decisions ; and the other, by making it unnecessary to resort to a remote and imaginary contract for what was clearly the business of every man and every hour. Throughout the whole horizon of morals and of politics, the consequences were glorious and vast. It might be said without danger of exaggeration, that they who sat in darkness had seen a great light. The mists in which mankind had jousted against each other were swept away, as when the sun of astronomical science arose in the full development of the principle of gravitation. If the object of legislation was the greatest happiness, *morality* was the promotion of the same end by the conduct of the individual ; and by analogy, the happiness of the world was the morality of nations.

". . . . . All the sublime obscurities, which had haunted the mind of man from the first formation of society,—the phantoms whose steps had been on earth, and their heads among the clouds —marshalled themselves at the sound of this new principle of connection and of union, and stood a regulated band, where all was order, symmetry, and force. What men had struggled for and bled, while they saw it but as through a glass darkly, was made the object of substantial knowledge and lively apprehension. The bones of sages and of patriots stirred within their tombs, that what they dimly saw and followed had become the world's common heritage. And the great result was wrought by no supernatural means, nor produced by any unparallelable concatenation of events. It was foretold by no oracles, and ushered by no portents ; but was brought about by the quiet and reiterated exercise of God's first gift of common sense."

Mr Bentham's discovery does not, as we think we shall be able to show, approach in importance to that of gravitation, to which he compares it. At all events, Mr Bentham seems to us to act much as Sir Isaac Newton would have done if he had gone about boasting that he was the first person who taught bricklayers not to jump off scaffolds and break their legs.

Does Mr Bentham profess to hold out any new motive which may induce men to promote the happiness of the species to which they belong? Not at all. He distinctly admits that, if he is asked why government should attempt to produce the greatest possible happiness, he can give no answer.

"The real answer," says he, "appeared to be, that men at large *ought* not to allow a government to afflict them with more evil or less good than they can help. What *a government* ought to do is a mysterious and searching question, which those may answer who know what it means ; but what other men ought to do is a question of no mystery at all. The word *ought*, if it means anything, must have reference to some kind of interest or motives ; and what interest a government has in doing right, when it happens to be interested in doing wrong, is a question for the schoolmen. The fact appears to be, that *ought* is not predicable of governments. The question is not why governments are bound not to do this or that, but why *other men* should let them if they can help it. The point is not to determine why the lion should not eat sheep, but why men should not eat their own mutton if they can."

The principle of Mr Bentham, if we understand it, is this, that mankind ought to act so as to produce their greatest happiness. The word *ought*, he tells us, has no meaning, unless it be used with reference to some interest. But the interest of a man is synonymous with his greatest happiness :—and therefore to say that a man ought to do a thing, is to say that it is for his greatest happiness to do it. And to say that mankind *ought* to act so as to produce their greatest happiness, is to say that the greatest happiness is the greatest happiness—and this is all!

Does Mr Bentham's principle tend to make any man wish for anything for which he would not have wished, or do anything which he would not have done, if the principle had never been heard of? If not, it is an utterly useless principle. Now, every man pursues his own happiness or interest—call it which you will. If his happiness coincides with the happiness of the species, then, whether he ever heard of the "greatest happiness principle" or not, he will, to the best of his knowledge and ability, attempt to produce the greatest happiness of the species. But, if what he thinks his happiness be inconsistent with the greatest happiness of mankind, will this new principle convert him to another frame of mind? Mr Bentham himself allows, as we have seen, that he can give no reason why a man should promote the greatest happiness of others if their greatest happiness be inconsistent with what he thinks his own. We should very much like to know how the Utilitarian principle would run when reduced to one plain imperative proposition? Will it run thus—pursue your own happiness? This is superfluous. Every man pursues it, according to his light, and always has pursued it, and always must pursue it. To say that a man has done anything, is to say that he thought it for his happiness to do it. Will the principle run thus—pursue the greatest happiness of mankind, whether it be your own greatest happiness or not? This is absurd and impossible; and Bentham himself allows it to be so. But, if the principle be not stated in one of these two ways, we cannot imagine how it is to be stated at all. Stated in one of these ways, it is an identical proposition,—true, but utterly barren of consequences. Stated in the other way, it is a contradiction in terms. Mr Bentham has distinctly declined the absurdity. Are we then to suppose that he adopts the truism?

There are thus, it seems, two great truths which the Utilitarian philosophy is to communicate to mankind—two truths which are to produce a revolution in morals, in laws, in governments, in literature, in the whole system of life. The first of these is speculative; the second is practical. The speculative truth is, that the greatest happiness is the greatest happiness. The practical rule is very simple; for it imports merely that men should never omit, when they wish for anything, to wish for it, or when they do anything, to do it! It is a great comfort to us to think that we readily assented to the former of these great doctrines as soon as it was stated to us; and that we have long endeavoured, as far as human frailty would permit, to conform to the latter in our practice. We are, however, inclined to suspect that the calamities of the human race have been owing, less to their not knowing that happiness was happiness, than to their not knowing how to obtain it—less to their neglecting to do what they did, than to their not being able to do what they wished, or not wishing to do what they ought.

Thus frivolous, thus useless is this philosophy,—"controversiarum ferax, operum effœta, ad garriendum prompta, ad generandum invalida."* The humble mechanic who discovers some slight improvement in the

* Bacon, *Novum Organum.*

construction of safety lamps or steam-vessels does more for the happiness of mankind than the "magnificent principle," as Mr Bentham calls it, will do in ten thousand years. The mechanic teaches us how we may in a small degree be better off than we were. The Utilitarian advises us with great pomp to be as well off as we can.

The doctrine of a moral sense may be very unphilosophical; but we do not think that it can be proved to be pernicious. Men did not entertain certain desires and aversions because they believed in a moral sense, but they gave the name of moral sense to a feeling which they found in their minds, however it came there. If they had given it no name at all it would still have influenced their actions; and it will not be very easy to demonstrate that it has influenced their actions the more because they have called it the moral sense. The theory of the original contract is a fiction, and a very absurd fiction; but in practice it meant, what the "greatest happiness principle," if ever it becomes a watchword of political warfare, will mean—that is to say, whatever served the turn of those who used it. Both the one expression and the other sound very well in debating clubs; but in the real conflicts of life our passions and interests bid them stand aside and know their place. The "greatest happiness principle" has always been latent under the words, social contract, justice, benevolence, patriotism, liberty, and so forth, just as far as it was for the happiness, real or imagined, of those who used these words to promote the greatest happiness of mankind. And of this we may be sure, that the words "greatest happiness" will never, in any man's mouth, mean more than the greatest happiness of others which is consistent with what he thinks his own. The project of mending a bad world by teaching people to give new names to old things reminds us of Walter Shandy's scheme for compensating the loss of his son's nose by christening him Trismegistus. What society wants is a new motive—not a new cant. If Mr Bentham can find out any argument yet undiscovered which may induce men to pursue the general happiness, he will indeed be a great benefactor to our species. But those whose happiness is identical with the general happiness are even now promoting the general happiness to the very best of their power and knowledge; and Mr Bentham himself confesses that he has no means of persuading those whose happiness is not identical with the general happiness to act upon his principle. Is not this, then, darkening counsel by words without knowledge? If the only fruit of the "magnificent principle" is to be, that the oppressors and pilferers of the next generation are to talk of seeking the greatest happiness of the greatest number, just as the same class of men have talked in our time of seeking to uphold the Protestant constitution—just as they talked under Anne of seeking the good of the Church, and under Cromwell of seeking the Lord—where is the gain? Is not every great question already enveloped in a sufficiently dark cloud of unmeaning words? Is it so difficult for a man to cant some one or more of the good old English cants which his father and grandfather canted before him, that he must learn, in the schools of the Utilitarians, a new sleight of tongue, to make fools clap and wise men sneer? Let our countrymen keep their eyes on the neophytes of this sect, and see whether we turn out to be mistaken in the prediction which we now hazard. It will before long be found, we prophesy, that, as the corruption of a dunce is the generation of an Utilitarian, so is the corruption of an Utilitarian the generation of a jobber.

The most elevated station that the "greatest happiness principle" is ever likely to attain is this, that it may be a fashionable phrase among newspaper writers and members of parliament—that it may succeed to the dignity which has been enjoyed by the "original contract," by the "constitution of 1688," and other expressions of the same kind. We do not apprehend that it is a less flexible cant than those which have preceded it, or that it will less easily furnish a pretext for any design for which a pretext may be required. The "original contract" meant in the Convention Parliament the co-ordinate authority of the Three Estates. If there were to be a radical insurrection to-morrow, the "original contract" would stand just as well for annual parliaments and universal suffrage. The "Glorious Constitution," again, has meant everything in turn: the Habeas Corpus Act, the Suspension of the Habeas Corpus Act, the Test Act, the Repeal of the Test Act. There has not been for many years a single important measure which has not been unconstitutional with its opponents, and which its supporters have not maintained to be agreeable to the true spirit of the constitution. Is it easier to ascertain what is for the greatest happiness of the human race than what is the constitution of England? If not, the "greatest happiness principle" will be what the "principles of the constitution" are, a thing to be appealed to by everybody, and understood by everybody in the sense which suits him best. It will mean cheap bread, dear bread, free trade, protecting duties, annual parliaments, septennial parliaments, universal suffrage, Old Sarum, trial by jury, martial law—everything, in short, good, bad, or indifferent, of which any person, from rapacity or from benevolence, chooses to undertake the defence. It will mean six-and-eightpence with the attorney, tithes at the rectory, and game-laws at the manor-house. The Statute of Uses, in appearance the most sweeping legislative reform in our history, was said to have produced no other effect than that of adding three words to a conveyance. The universal admission of Mr Bentham's great principle would, as far as we can see, produce no other effect than that those orators who, while waiting for a meaning, gain time (like bankers paying in sixpences during a run) by uttering words that mean nothing would substitute "the greatest happiness," or rather, as the longer phrase, "the greatest happiness of the greatest number," for "under existing circumstances,"—"now that I am on my legs,"—and "Mr Speaker, I, for one, am free to say." In fact, principles of this sort resemble those forms which are sold by law-stationers, with blanks for the names of parties, and for the special circumstances of every case—mere customary headings and conclusions, which are equally at the command of the most honest and of the most unrighteous claimant. It is on the filling up that everything depends.

The "greatest happiness principle" of Mr Bentham is included in the Christian morality; and, to our thinking, it is there exhibited in an infinitely more sound and philosophical form than in the Utilitarian speculations. For in the New Testament it is neither an identical proposition, nor a contradiction in terms; and, as laid down by Mr Bentham, it must be either the one or the other. "Do as you would be done by: Love your neighbour as yourself:" these are the precepts of Jesus Christ. Understood in an enlarged sense, these precepts are, in fact, a direction to every man to promote the greatest happiness of the greatest number. But this direction would be utterly unmeaning, as it actually is in Mr Bentham's philosophy, unless it were accompanied by a sanction. In the Christian scheme, accordingly, it is accompanied by a sanction of immense force. To a man whose greatest happiness in this world is inconsistent with the greatest happiness of the greatest number is held out the prospect of an infinite happiness hereafter, from which he excludes himself by wronging his fellow-creatures here.

This is practical philosophy, as practical as that on which penal legislation is founded. A man is told to do something which otherwise he would not do, and is furnished with a new motive for doing it. Mr Bentham has no new motive to furnish his disciples with. He has talents sufficient to effect anything that can be effected. But to induce men to act without an inducement is too much, even for him. He should reflect that the whole vast world of morals cannot be moved unless the mover can obtain some stand for his engines beyond it. He acts as Archimedes would have done, if he had attempted to move the earth by a lever fixed on the earth. The action and reaction neutralise each other. The artist labours, and the world remains at rest. Mr Bentham can only tell us to do something which we have always been doing, and should still have continued to do, if we had never heard of the "greatest happiness principle"—or else to do something which we have no conceivable motive for doing, and therefore shall not do. Mr Bentham's principle is at best no more than the golden rule of the Gospel without its sanction. Whatever evils, therefore, have existed in societies in which the authority of the Gospel is recognised may, *a fortiori*, as it appears to us, exist in societies in which the Utilitarian principle is recognised. We do not apprehend that it is more difficult for a tyrant or a persecutor to persuade himself and others that in putting to death those who oppose his power or differ from his opinions he is pursuing "the greatest happiness," than that he is doing as he would be done by. But religion gives him a motive for doing as he would be done by: and Mr Bentham furnishes him no motive to induce him to promote the general happiness. If, on the other hand, Mr Bentham's principle mean only that every man should pursue his own greatest happiness, he merely asserts what everybody knows, and recommends what everybody does.

It is not upon this "greatest happiness principle" that the fame of Mr Bentham will rest. He has not taught people to pursue their own happiness; for that they always did. He has not taught them to promote the happiness of others, at the expense of their own; for that they will not and cannot do. But he has taught them *how*, in some most important points, to promote their own happiness; and, if his school had emulated him as successfully in this respect as in the trick of passing off truisms for discoveries, the name of Benthamite would have been no word for the scoffer. But few of those who consider themselves as in a more especial manner his followers have anything in common with him but his faults. The whole science of Jurisprudence is his. He has done much for political economy; but we are not aware that in either department any improvement has been made by members of his sect. He discovered truths; all that *they* have done has been to make those truths unpopular. He investigated the philosophy of law; he could teach them only to snarl at lawyers.

We entertain no apprehensions of danger to the institutions of this country from the Utilitarians. Our fears are of a different kind. We dread the odium and discredit of their alliance. We wish to see a broad and clear line drawn between the judicious friends of practical reform and a sect which, having derived all its influence from the countenance which they have imprudently bestowed upon it, hates them with the deadly hatred of ingratitude. There is not, and we firmly believe that there never was, in this country a party so unpopular. They have already made the science of political economy—a science of vast importance to the welfare of nations—an object of disgust to the majority of the community. The question of parliamentary reform will share the same fate if once an association be formed in the public mind between Reform and Utilitarianism.

We bear no enmity to any member of the sect; and for Mr Bentham we entertain very high admiration. We know that among his followers there are some well-intentioned men, and some men of talents; but we cannot say that we think the logic on which they pride themselves likely to improve their heads, or the scheme of morality which they have adopted likely to improve their hearts. Their theory of morals, however, well deserves an article to itself; and perhaps, on some future occasion, we may discuss it more fully than time and space at present allow.

The preceding article was written, and was actually in types, when a letter from Mr Bentham appeared in the newspapers, importing that, "though he had furnished the Westminster Review with some *memoranda* respecting 'the greatest happiness principle,' he had nothing to do with the remarks on our former article." We are truly happy to find that this illustrious man had so small a share in a performance which, for his sake, we have treated with far greater lenity than it deserved. The mistake, however, does not in the least affect any part of our arguments; and we have therefore thought it unnecessary to cancel or cast anew any of the foregoing pages. Indeed, we are not sorry that the world should see how respectfully we were disposed to treat a great man, even when we considered him as the author of a very weak and very unfair attack on ourselves. We wish, however, to intimate to the actual writer of that attack that our civilities were intended for the author of the "Preuves Judiciaires," and the "Defence of Usury"—and not for him. We cannot conclude, indeed, without expressing a wish—though we fear it has but little chance of reaching Mr Bentham—that he would endeavour to find better editors for his compositions. If M. Dumont had not been a *rédacteur* of a different description from some of his successors, Mr Bentham would never have attained the distinction of even giving his name to a sect.

UTILITARIAN THEORY OF GOVERNMENT.

(OCTOBER 1829.)

Westminster Review (*XXII., Art.* 16), *on the Strictures of the Edinburgh Review* (*XCVIII. Art.* 1), *on the Utilitarian Theory of Government, and the "Greatest Happiness Principle."*

WE have long been of opinion that the Utilitarians have owed all their influence to a mere delusion—that, while professing to have submitted their minds to an intellectual discipline of peculiar severity, to have discarded all sentimentality, and to have acquired consummate skill in the art of reasoning, they are decidedly inferior to the mass of educated men in the very qualities in which they conceive themselves to excel. They have undoubtedly freed themselves from the dominion of some absurd notions. But their struggle for intellectual emancipation has ended, as injudicious and violent struggles for political emancipation too often end, in a mere change of tyrants. Indeed, we are not sure that we do not prefer the venerable nonsense which holds prescriptive sway over the ultra-Tory to the upstart dynasty of prejudices and sophisms by which the revolutionists of the moral world have suffered themselves to be enslaved.

The Utilitarians have sometimes been abused as intolerant, arrogant, irreligious,—as enemies of literature, of the fine arts, and of the domestic charities. They have been reviled for some things of which they were guilty, and for some of which they were innocent. But scarcely anybody seems to have perceived that almost all their peculiar faults arise from the utter want both of comprehensiveness and of precision in their mode of reasoning. We have, for some time past, been convinced that this was really the case; and that, whenever their philosophy should be boldly and unsparingly scrutinised, the world would see that it had been under a mistake respecting them.

We have made the experiment; and it has succeeded far beyond our most sanguine expectations. A chosen champion of the School has come forth against us. A specimen of his logical abilities now lies before us; and we pledge ourselves to show that no prebendary at an anti-Catholic meeting, no true-blue baronet after the third bottle at a Pitt Club, ever displayed such utter incapacity of comprehending or answering an argument as appears in the speculations of this Utilitarian apostle; that he does not understand our meaning, or Mr Mill's meaning, or Mr Bentham's meaning, or his own meaning; and that the various parts of his system—if the name of system can be so misapplied—directly contradict each other.

Having shown this, we intend to leave him in undisputed possession of whatever advantage he may derive from the last word. We propose only to convince the public that there is nothing in the far-famed logic of the Utilitarians of which any plain man has reason to be afraid; that this logic will impose on no man who dares to look it in the face.

The Westminster Reviewer begins by charging us with having misrepresented an important part of Mr Mill's argument.

> "The first extract given by the Edinburgh Reviewers from the Essay was an insulated passage, purposely despoiled of what had preceded and what followed. The author had been observing, that 'some profound and benevolent investigators of human affairs had adopted the conclusion that, of all the possible forms of government, absolute monarchy is the best.' This is what the reviewers have omitted at the beginning. He then adds, as in the extract, that 'Experience, *if we look only at the outside of the facts*, appears to be divided on this subject;' there are Caligulas in one place, and kings of Denmark in another. 'As the surface of history affords, therefore, no certain principle of decision, *we must go beyond the surface*, and penetrate to the springs within.' This is what the reviewers have omitted at the end."

It is perfectly true that our quotation from Mr Mill's essay was, like most other quotations, preceded and followed by something which we did not quote. But, if the Westminster Reviewer means to say that either what preceded or what followed would, if quoted, have shown that we put a wrong interpretation on the passage which was extracted, he does not understand Mr Mill rightly.

Mr Mill undoubtedly says that, "as the surface of history affords no certain principle of decision, we must go beyond the surface, and penetrate to the springs within." But these expressions will admit of several interpretations. In what sense, then, does Mr Mill use them? If he means that we ought to inspect the facts with close attention, he means what is rational. But, if he means that we ought to leave the facts, with all their apparent inconsistencies, unexplained—to lay down a general principle of the widest extent, and to deduce doctrines from that principle by syllogistic argument, without pausing to consider whether those doctrines be or be not consistent with the facts,—then he means what is irrational; and this is clearly what he does mean: for he immediately begins, without offering the least explanation of the contradictory appearances which he has himself described, to go beyond the surface in the following manner:—"That one human being will desire to render the person and property of another subservient to his pleasures, notwithstanding the pain or loss of pleasure which it may occasion to that other individual, is the foundation of government. The desire of the object implies the desire of the power necessary to accomplish the object." And thus he proceeds to deduce consequences directly inconsistent with what he has himself stated respecting the situation of the Danish people.

If we assume that the object of government is the preservation of the persons and property of men, then we must hold that, wherever that object is attained, there the principle of good government exists. If that object be attained both in Denmark and in the United States of America, then that which makes government good must exist, under whatever disguise of title or name, both in Denmark and in the United States. If men lived in fear for their lives and their possessions under Nero and under the National Convention, it follows that the causes from which misgovernment proceeds existed both in the despotism of Rome and in the democracy of France. What, then, is that which, being found in Denmark and in the United States, and not being found in the Roman

Empire or under the administration of Robespierre, renders governments, widely differing in their external form, practically good? Be it what it may, it certainly is not that which Mr Mill proves *a priori* that it must be,—a democratic representative assembly. For the Danes have no such assembly.

The latent principle of good government ought to be tracked, as it appears to us, in the same manner in which Lord Bacon proposed to track the principle of Heat. Make as large a list as possible, said that great man, of those bodies in which, however widely they differ from each other in appearance, we perceive heat; and as large a list as possible of those which, while they bear a general resemblance to hot bodies, are nevertheless not hot. Observe the different degrees of heat in different hot bodies; and then, if there be something which is found in all hot bodies, and of which the increase or diminution is always accompanied by an increase or diminution of heat, we may hope that we have really discovered the object of our search. In the same manner we ought to examine the constitution of all those communities in which, under whatever form, the blessings of good government are enjoyed; and to discover, if possible, in what they resemble each other, and in what they all differ from those societies in which the object of government is not attained. By proceeding thus we shall arrive, not indeed at a perfect theory of government, but at a theory which will be of great practical use, and which the experience of every successive generation will probably bring nearer and nearer to perfection.

The inconsistencies into which Mr Mill has been betrayed by taking a different course ought to serve as a warning to all speculators. Because Denmark is well governed by a monarch who, in appearance at least, is absolute, Mr Mill thinks that the only mode of arriving at the true principles of government is to deduce them *a priori* from the laws of human nature. And what conclusion does he bring out by this deduction? We will give it in his own words:—"In the grand discovery of modern times, the system of representation, the solution of all the difficulties, both speculative and practical, will perhaps be found. If it cannot, we seem to be forced upon the extraordinary conclusion that good government is impossible." That the Danes are well governed without a representation is a reason for deducing the theory of government from a general principle from which it necessarily follows that good government is impossible without a representation! We have done our best to put this question plainly; and we think that, if the Westminster Reviewer will read over what we have written twice or thrice with patience and attention, some glimpse of our meaning will break in even on his mind.

Some objections follow, so frivolous and unfair, that we are almost ashamed to notice them.

> "When it was said that there was in Denmark a balanced contest between the king and the nobility, what was said was, that there was a balanced contest, but it did not last. It was balanced till something put an end to the balance; and so is everything else. That such a balance will not last, is precisely what Mr Mill had demonstrated."

Mr Mill, we positively affirm, pretends to demonstrate, not merely that a balanced contest between the king and the aristocracy will not last, but that the chances are as infinity to one against the existence of such a balanced contest. This is a mere question of fact. We quote the words of the essay, and defy the Westminster Reviewer to impeach our accuracy :—

"It seems impossible that such equality should ever exist. How is it to be established? Or by what criterion is it to be ascertained? If there is no such criterion, it must, in all cases, be the result of chance. If so, the chances against it are as infinity to one."

The Reviewer has confounded the division of power with the balance or equal division of power. Mr Mill says that the division of power can never exist long, because it is next to impossible that the equal division of power should ever exist at all.

"When Mr Mill asserted that it cannot be for the interest of either the monarchy or the aristocracy to combine with the democracy, it is plain he did not assert that if the monarchy and aristocracy were in doubtful contest with each other, they would not, either of them, accept of the assistance of the democracy. He spoke of their taking the side of the democracy ; not of their allowing the democracy to take side with themselves."

If Mr Mill meant anything, he must have meant this—that the monarchy and the aristocracy will never forget their enmity to the democracy in their enmity to each other.

"The monarchy and aristocracy," says he, "have all possible motives for endeavouring to obtain unlimited power over the persons and property of the community. The consequence is inevitable. They have all possible motives for combining to obtain that power, and unless the people have power enough to be a match for both they have no protection. The balance, therefore, is a thing the existence of which upon the best possible evidence is to be regarded as impossible."

If Mr Mill meant only what the Westminster Reviewer conceives him to have meant, his argument would leave the popular theory of the balance quite untouched. For it is the very theory of the balance that the help of the people will be solicited by the nobles when hard pressed by the king, and by the king when hard pressed by the nobles ; and that, as the price of giving alternate support to the crown and the aristocracy, they will obtain something for themselves, as the Reviewer admits that they have done in Denmark. If Mr Mill admits this, he admits the only theory of the balance of which we ever heard—that very theory which he has declared to be wild and chimerical. If he denies it, he is at issue with the Westminster Reviewer as to the phenomena of the Danish government.

We now come to a more important passage. Our opponent has discovered, as he conceives, a radical error which runs through our whole argument, and vitiates every part of it. We suspect that we shall spoil his triumph.

"Mr Mill never asserted '*that under no despotic government does any human being, except the tools of the sovereign, possess more than the necessaries of life, and that the most intense degree of terror is kept up by constant cruelty.*' He said that absolute power leads to such results 'by infallible sequence, where power over a community is attained, *and nothing checks*.' The critic on the Mount never made a more palpable misquotation.

"The spirit of this misquotation runs through every part of the reply of the Edinburgh Review that relates to the Essay on Government; and is repeated in as many shapes as the Roman pork. The whole description of 'Mr Mill's argument against despotism,'—including the illustration from right-angled triangles and the square of the hypothenuse,—is founded on this invention of saying what an author has not said, and leaving unsaid what he has."

We thought, and still think, for reasons which our readers will soon understand, that we represented Mr Mill's principle quite fairly, and according to the rule of law and common sense, *ut res magis valeat quam pereat*. Let us, however, give him all the advantage of the explanation tendered by his advocate, and see what he will gain by it.

The Utilitarian doctrine then is, not that despots and aristocracies will always plunder and oppress the people to the last point, but that they will do so if nothing checks them.

In the first place, it is quite clear that the doctrine thus stated is of no use at all, unless the force of the checks be estimated. The first law of motion is, that a ball once projected will fly on to all eternity with undiminished velocity, unless something checks. The fact is, that a ball stops in a few seconds after proceeding a few yards with very variable motion. Every man would wring his child's neck and pick his friend's pocket if nothing checked him. In fact, the principle thus stated means only that governments will oppress unless they abstain from oppressing. This is quite true, we own. But we might with equal propriety turn the maxim round, and lay it down, as the fundamental principle of government, that all rulers will govern well, unless some motive interferes to keep them from doing so.

If there be, as the Westminster Reviewer acknowledges, certain checks which, under political institutions the most arbitrary in seeming, sometimes produce good government, and almost always place some restraint on the rapacity and cruelty of the powerful, surely the knowledge of those checks, of their nature, and of their effect, must be a most important part of the science of government. Does Mr Mill say anything upon this part of the subject? Not one word.

The line of defence now taken by the Utilitarians evidently degrades Mr Mill's theory of government from the rank which, till within the last few months, was claimed for it by the whole sect. It is no longer a practical system, fit to guide statesmen, but merely a barren exercise of the intellect, like those propositions in mechanics in which the effect of friction and of the resistance of the air is left out of the question; and which, therefore, though correctly deduced from the premises, are in practice utterly false. For, if Mr Mill professes to prove only that absolute monarchy and aristocracy are pernicious without checks,—if he allows that there are checks which produce good government even under absolute monarchs and aristocracies,—and if he omits to tell us what those checks are, and what effects they produce under different circumstances,—he surely gives us no information which can be of real utility.

But the fact is,—and it is most extraordinary that the Westminster Reviewer should not have perceived it—that if once the existence of checks on the abuse of power in monarchies and aristocracies be admitted, the whole of Mr Mill's theory falls to the ground at once. This is so palpable, that in spite of the opinion of the Westminster Reviewer, we must acquit Mr Mill of having intended to make such an admission. We still think that the words, "where power over a community is attained, and nothing checks," must not be understood to mean that under a monarchical or aristocratical form of government there can really be any check which can in any degree mitigate the wretchedness of the people.

For all possible checks may be classed under two general heads,—want of will, and want of power. Now, if a king or an aristocracy, having the power to plunder and oppress the people, can want the will, all Mr Mill's principles of human nature must be pronounced unsound. He tells us, "that the desire to possess unlimited power of inflicting pain upon others, is an inseparable part of human nature;" and that "a chain of inference, close and strong to a most unusual degree," leads to the conclusion that those who possess this power will always desire to use it. It is plain, therefore, that, if Mr Mill's principles be sound, the check on a monarchical or an aristocratical government will not be the want of will to oppress.

If a king or an aristocracy, having, as Mr Mill tells us that they always must have, the will to oppress the people with the utmost severity, want the power, then the government, by whatever name it may be called, must be virtually a mixed government or a pure democracy: for it is quite clear that the people possess some power in the state—some means of influencing the nominal rulers. But Mr Mill has demonstrated that no mixed government can possibly exist, or at least that such a government must come to a very speedy end: therefore, every country in which people not in the service of the government have, for any length of time, been permitted to accumulate more than the bare means of subsistence must be a pure democracy. That is to say, France before the revolution, and Ireland during the last century, were pure democracies. Prussia, Austria, Russia, all the governments of the civilised world, are pure democracies. If this be not a *reductio ad absurdum*, we do not know what is.

The errors of Mr Mill proceed principally from that radical vice in his reasoning which, in our last number we described in the words of Lord Bacon. The Westminster Reviewer is unable to discover the meaning of our extracts from the *Novum Organum*, and expresses himself as follows:

> "The quotations from Lord Bacon are misapplications, such as anybody may make to anything he dislikes. There is no more resemblance between pain, pleasure, motives, &c., and *substantia*, *generatio*, *corruptio*, *elementum*, *materia*,—than between lines, angles, magnitudes, &c., and the same."

It would perhaps be unreasonable to expect that a writer who cannot understand his own English should understand Lord Bacon's Latin. We will therefore attempt to make our meaning clearer.

What Lord Bacon blames in the schoolmen of his time is this,—that they reasoned syllogistically on words which had not been defined with precision; such as moist, dry, generation, corruption, and so forth. Mr Mill's error is exactly of the same kind. He reasons syllogistically about power, pleasure, and pain, without attaching any definite notion to any one of those words. There is no more resemblance, says the

Westminster Reviewer, between pain and *substantia* than between pain and a line or an angle. By his permission, in the very point to which Lord Bacon's observation applies, Mr Mill's subjects do resemble the *substantia* and *elementum* of the schoolmen and differ from the lines and magnitudes of Euclid. We can reason *a priori* on mathematics, because we can define with an exactitude which precludes all possibility of confusion. If a mathematician were to admit the least laxity into his notions, if he were to allow himself to be deluded by the vague sense which words bear in popular use, or by the aspect of an ill-drawn diagram, if he were to forget in his reasonings that a point was indivisible, or that the definition of a line excluded breadth, there would be no end to his blunders. The schoolmen tried to reason mathematically about things which had not been, and perhaps could not be, defined with mathematical accuracy. We know the result. Mr Mill has in our time attempted to do the same. He talks of power, for example, as if the meaning of the word power were as determinate as the meaning of the word circle. But, when we analyse his speculations, we find that his notion of power is, in the words of Bacon, "*phantastica et male terminata.*"

There are two senses in which we may use the word *power*, and those words which denote the various distributions of power, as, for example, *monarchy*;—the one sense popular and superficial, the other more scientific and accurate. Mr Mill, since he chose to reason *a priori*, ought to have clearly pointed out in which sense he intended to use words of this kind, and to have adhered inflexibly to the sense on which he fixed. Instead of doing this, he flies backwards and forwards from the one sense to the other, and brings out conclusions at last which suit neither.

The state of those two communities to which he has himself referred—the kingdom of Denmark and the empire of Rome—may serve to illustrate our meaning. Looking merely at the surface of things, we should call Denmark a despotic monarchy, and the Roman world, in the first century after Christ, an aristocratical republic. Caligula was, in theory, nothing more than a magistrate elected by the senate, and subject to the senate. That irresponsible dignity which, in the most limited monarchies of our time, is ascribed to the person of the sovereign never belonged to the earlier Cæsars. The sentence of death which the great council of the commonwealth passed on Nero was strictly according to the theory of the constitution. Yet, in fact, the power of the Roman emperors approached nearer to absolute dominion than that of any prince in modern Europe. On the other hand, the King of Denmark, in theory the most despotic of princes, would in practice find it most perilous to indulge in cruelty and licentiousness. Nor is there, we believe, at the present moment a single sovereign in our part of the world who has so much real power over the lives of his subjects as Robespierre, while he lodged at a chandler's and dined at a restaurateur's, exercised over the lives of those whom he called his fellow citizens.

Mr Mill and the Westminster Reviewer seem to agree that there cannot long exist in any society a division of power between a monarch, an aristocracy, and the people, or between any two of them. However the power be distributed, one of the three parties will, according to them, inevitably monopolise the whole. Now, what is here meant by power? If Mr Mill speaks of the external semblance of power,—of power recognised by the theory of the constitution,—he is palpably wrong. In

England, for example, we have had for ages the name and form of a mixed government, if nothing more. Indeed, Mr Mill himself owns that there are appearances which have given colour to the theory of the balance, though he maintains that these appearances are delusive. But, if he uses the word power in a deeper and philosophical sense, he is, if possible, still more in the wrong than on the former supposition. For, if he had considered in what the power of one human being over other human beings must ultimately consist, he would have perceived, not only that there are mixed governments in the world, but that all the governments in the world, and all the governments which can even be conceived as existing in the world, are virtually mixed.

If a king possessed the lamp of Aladdin,—if he governed by the help of a genius who carried away the daughters and wives of his subjects through the air to the royal *Parc-aux-cerfs*, and turned into stone every man who wagged a finger against his majesty's government, there would indeed be an unmixed despotism. But, fortunately, a ruler can be gratified only by means of his subjects. His power depends on their obedience; and, as any three or four of them are more than a match for him by himself, he can only enforce the unwilling obedience of some by means of the willing obedience of others.

Take any of those who are popularly called absolute princes—Napoleon for example. Could Napoleon have walked through Paris, cutting off the head of one person in every house which he passed? Certainly not without the assistance of an army. If not, why not? Because the people had sufficient physical power to resist him, and would have put forth that power in defence of their lives and of the lives of their children. In other words, there was a portion of power in the democracy under Napoleon. Napoleon might probably have indulged himself in such an atrocious freak of power if his army would have seconded him. But, if his army had taken part with the people, he would have found himself utterly helpless; and, even if they had obeyed his orders against the people, they would not have suffered him to decimate their own body. In other words, there was a portion of power in the hands of a minority of the people, that is to say, in the hands of an aristocracy, under the reign of Napoleon.

To come nearer home,—Mr Mill tells us that it is a mistake to imagine that the English government is mixed. He holds, we suppose, with all the politicians of the Utilitarian school, that it is purely aristocratical. There certainly is an aristocracy in England; and we are afraid that their power is greater than it ought to be. They have power enough to keep up the game-laws and corn-laws; but they have not power enough to subject the bodies of men of the lowest class to wanton outrage at their pleasure. Suppose that they were to make a law that any gentleman of two thousand a-year might have a day-labourer or a pauper flogged with a cat-of-nine-tails whenever the whim might take him. It is quite clear that the first day on which such flagellation should be administered would be the last day of the English aristocracy. In this point, and in many other points which might be named, the commonalty in our island enjoy a security quite as complete as if they exercised the right of universal suffrage. We say, therefore, that the English people have in their own hands a sufficient guarantee that in some points the aristocracy will conform to their wishes;—in other words, they have a certain portion of power over the aristocracy. Therefore the English government is mixed.

Wherever a king or an oligarchy refrains from the last extremity of rapacity and tyranny through fear of the resistance of the people, there the constitution, whatever it may be called, is in some measure democratical. The admixture of democratic power may be slight. It may be much slighter than it ought to be; but some admixture there is. Wherever a numerical minority, by means of superior wealth or intelligence, of political concert, or of military discipline, exercises a greater influence on the society than any other equal number of persons,—there, whatever the form of government may be called, a mixture of aristocracy does in fact exist. And, wherever a single man, from whatever cause, is so necessary to the community, or to any portion of it, that he possesses more power than any other man, there is a mixture of monarchy. This is the philosophical classification of governments: and if we use this classification we shall find, not only that there are mixed governments, but that all governments are, and must always be, mixed. But we may safely challenge Mr Mill to give any definition of power, or to make any classification of governments, which shall bear him out in his assertion that a lasting division of authority is impracticable.

It is evidently on the real distribution of power, and not on names and badges, that the happiness of nations must depend. The representative system, though doubtless a great and precious discovery in politics, is only one of the many modes in which the democratic part of the community can efficiently check the governing few. That certain men have been chosen as deputies of the people,—that there is a piece of paper stating such deputies to possess certain powers,—these circumstances in themselves constitute no security for good government. Such a constitution nominally existed in France; while, in fact, an oligarchy of committees and clubs trampled at once on the electors and the elected. Representation is a very happy contrivance for enabling large bodies of men to exert their power with less risk of disorder than there would otherwise be. But, assuredly, it does not of itself give power. Unless a representative assembly is sure of being supported in the last resort by the physical strength of large masses who have spirit to defend the constitution and sense to defend it in concert, the mob of the town in which it meets may overawe it;—the howls of the listeners in its gallery may silence its deliberations;—an able and daring individual may dissolve it. And, if that sense and that spirit of which we speak be diffused through a society, then, even without a representative assembly, that society will enjoy many of the blessings of good government.

Which is the better able to defend himself;—a strong man with nothing but his fists, or a paralytic cripple encumbered with a sword which he cannot lift? Such, we believe, is the difference between Denmark and some new republics in which the constitutional forms of the United States have been most sedulously imitated.

Look at the Long Parliament on the day on which Charles came to seize the five members: and look at it again on the day when Cromwell stamped with his foot on its floor. On which day was its apparent power the greater? On which day was its real power the less? Nominally subject, it was able to defy the sovereign. Nominally sovereign, it was turned out of doors by its servant.

Constitutions are in politics what paper money is in commerce. They afford great facilities and conveniences. But we must not attribute to them that value which really belongs to what they represent. They are not power, but symbols of power, and will, in an emergency, prove altogether useless unless the power for which they stand be forthcoming. The real power by which the community is governed is made up of all the means which all its members possess of giving pleasure or pain to each other.

Great light may be thrown on the nature of a circulating medium by the phenomena of a state of barter. And in the same manner it may be useful to those who wish to comprehend the nature and operation of the outward signs of power to look at communities in which no such signs exist; for example, at the great community of nations. There we find nothing analogous to a constitution; but do we not find a government? We do in fact find government in its purest, and simplest, and most intelligible form. We see one portion of power acting directly on another portion of power. We see a certain police kept up; the weak to a certain degree protected; the strong to a certain degree restrained. We see the principle of the balance in constant operation. We see the whole system sometimes undisturbed by any attempt at encroachment for twenty or thirty years at a time; and all this is produced without a legislative assembly, or an executive magistracy—without tribunals—without any code which deserves the name; solely by the mutual hopes and fears of the various members of the federation. In the community of nations, the first appeal is to physical force. In communities of men, forms of government serve to put off that appeal, and often render it unnecessary. But it is still open to the oppressed or the ambitious.

Of course, we do not mean to deny that a form of government will, after it has existed for a long time, materially affect the real distribution of power throughout the community. This is because those who administer a government, with their dependants, form a compact and disciplined body, which, acting methodically and in concert, is more powerful than any other equally numerous body which is inferior in organisation. The power of rulers is not, as superficial observers sometimes seem to think, a thing *sui generis*. It is exactly similar in kind, though generally superior in amount, to that of any set of conspirators who plot to overthrow it. We have seen in our time the most extensive and the best organised conspiracy that ever existed—a conspiracy which possessed all the elements of real power in so great a degree that it was able to cope with a strong government, and to triumph over it—the Catholic Association. An Utilitarian would tell us, we suppose, that the Irish Catholics had no portion of political power whatever on the first day of the late Session of Parliament.

Let us really go beyond the surface of facts: let us, in the sound sense of the words, penetrate to the springs within; and the deeper we go the more reason shall we find to smile at those theorists who hold that the sole hope of the human race is in a rule-of-three sum and a ballot-box.

We must now return to the Westminster Reviewer. The following paragraph is an excellent specimen of his peculiar mode of understanding and answering arguments.

"The reply to the argument against 'saturation,' supplies its own answer. The reason why it is of no use to try to 'saturate' is precisely what the Edinburgh Reviewers have suggested,—'*that there is no limit to the number of thieves.*' There are the thieves, and the thieves' cousins,—with their men-servants, their maid-servants, and their little ones, to the fortieth generation. It is true, that 'a man cannot become a king or a member of the aristocracy whenever he chooses;' but if there is to be no limit to the depredators except their own inclination to increase and multiply, the situation of those who are to suffer is as wretched as it needs be. It is impossible to define what *are* 'corporal pleasures.' A Duchess of Cleveland was 'a corporal pleasure.' The most disgraceful period in the history of any nation—that of the Restoration—presents an instance of the length to which it is possible to go in an attempt to 'saturate' with pleasures of this kind."

To reason with such a writer is like talking to a deaf man who catches at a stray word, makes answer beside the mark, and is led further and further into error by every attempt to explain. Yet, that our readers may fully appreciate the abilities of the new philosophers, we shall take the trouble to go over some of our ground again.

Mr Mill attempts to prove that there is no point of saturation with the objects of human desire. He then takes it for granted that men have no objects of desire but those which can be obtained only at the expense of the happiness of others. Hence he infers that absolute monarchs and aristocracies will necessarily oppress and pillage the people to a frightful extent.

We answered in substance thus. There are two kinds of objects of desire; those which give mere bodily pleasure, and those which please though the medium of associations. Objects of the former class, it is true, a man cannot obtain without depriving somebody else of a share. But then with these every man is soon satisfied. A king or an aristocracy cannot spend any very large portion of the national wealth on the mere pleasures of sense. With the pleasures which belong to us as reasoning and imaginative beings we are never satiated, it is true; but then, on the other hand, many of those pleasures can be obtained without injury to any person, and some of them can be obtained only by doing good to others.

The Westminster Reviewer, in his former attack on us, laughed at us for saying that a king or an aristocracy could not be easily satiated with the pleasures of sense, and asked why the same course was not tried with thieves. We were not a little surprised at so silly an objection from the pen, as we imagined, of Mr Bentham. We returned, however, a very simple answer. There is no limit to the number of thieves. Any man who chooses can steal: but a man cannot become a member of the aristocracy or a king whenever he chooses. To satiate one thief, is to tempt twenty other people to steal. But by satiating one king or five hundred nobles with bodily pleasures we do not produce more kings or more nobles. The answer of the Westminster Reviewer we have quoted above; and it will amply repay our readers for the trouble of examining it. We never read any passage which indicated notions so vague and confused. The number of the thieves, says our Utilitarian, is not limited. For there are the dependants and friends of the king and of the nobles. Is it possible that he should not perceive that this comes under a different head? The bodily pleasures which a man in power dispenses among his creatures are bodily pleasures as respects his creatures, no doubt. But the pleasure which he derives from bestowing them is not a bodily pleasure. It is one of those pleasures which belong to him as a reasoning and imaginative being. No man of common understanding can have failed to perceive that, when we said that a king or an aristocracy might easily be supplied to satiety with sensual pleasures, we were speaking of sensual pleasures directly enjoyed by themselves. But "it is impossible," says the Reviewer, "to define what are corporal pleasures."

Our brother would indeed, we suspect, find it a difficult task; nor, if we are to judge of his genius for classification from the specimen which immediately follows, would we advise him to make the attempt. "A Duchess of Cleveland was a corporal pleasure." And to this wise remark is appended a note, setting forth that Charles the Second gave to the Duchess of Cleveland the money which he ought to have spent on the war with Holland. We scarcely know how to answer a man who unites so much pretension to so much ignorance. There are, among the many Utilitarians who talk about Hume, Condillac, and Hartley, a few who have read those writers. Let the Reviewer ask one of these what he thinks on the subject. We shall not undertake to whip a pupil of so little promise through his first course of metaphysics. We shall, therefore, only say—leaving him to guess and wonder what we can mean—that, in our opinion, the Duchess of Cleveland was not a merely corporal pleasure, —that the feeling which leads a prince to prefer one woman to all others, and to lavish the wealth of kingdoms on her, is a feeling which can only be explained by the law of association.

But we are tired, and even more ashamed than tired, of exposing these blunders. The whole article is of a piece. One passage, however, we must select, because it contains a very gross misrepresentation.

> "'*They never alluded to the French Revolution for the purpose of proving that the poor were inclined to rob the rich.*' They only said, 'as soon as the poor *again* began to compare their cottages and salads with the hotels and banquets of the rich, there would have been another scramble for property, another general confiscation,' &c."

We said that, *if Mr Mill's principles of human nature were correct*, there would have been another scramble for property, and another confiscation. We particularly pointed this out in our last article. We showed the Westminster Reviewer that he had misunderstood us. We dwelt particularly on the condition which was introduced into our statement. We said that we had not given, and did not mean to give, any opinion of our own. And, after this, the Westminster Reviewer thinks proper to repeat his former misrepresentation, without taking the least notice of that qualification to which we, in the most marked manner, called his attention.

We hasten on to the most curious part of the article under our consideration—the defence of the "greatest happiness principle." The Reviewer charges us with having quite mistaken its nature.

> "All that they have established is, that they do not understand it. Instead of the truism of the Whigs, 'that the greatest happiness is the greatest happiness,' what Mr Bentham had demonstrated, or at all events had laid such foundations that there was no trouble in demonstrating, was, that the greatest happiness of the individual was in the long run to be obtained by pursuing the greatest happiness of the aggregate."

It was distinctly admitted by the Westminster Reviewer, as we remarked in our last article, that he could give no answer to the question, —why governments should attempt to produce the greatest possible happiness? The Reviewer replies thus:—

> "Nothing of the kind will be admitted at all. In the passage thus

selected to be tacked to the other, the question started was, concerning 'the object of government;' in which government was spoken of as an operation, not as anything that is capable of feeling pleasure or pain. In this sense it is true enough, that *ought* is not predicable of governments."

We will quote, once again, the passage which we quoted in our last Number; and we really hope that our brother critic will feel something like shame while he peruses it.

"The real answer appeared to be, that men at large *ought* not to allow a government to afflict them with more evil or less good, than they can help. What a *government* ought to do is a mysterious and searching question which those may answer who know what it means; but what other men ought to do is a question of no mystery at all. The word *ought*, if it means anything, must have reference to some kind of interest or motives; and what interest a government has in doing right, when it happens to be interested in doing wrong, is a question for the schoolmen. The fact appears to be that *ought* is not predicable of governments. The question is not, why governments are bound not to do this or that, but why other men should let them if they can help it. The point is not to determine why the lion should not eat sheep, but why men should not eat their own mutton if they can."

We defy the Westminster Reviewer to reconcile this passage with the "general happiness principle" as he now states it. He tells us that he meant by government, not the people invested with the powers of government, but a mere *operation* incapable of feeling pleasure or pain. We say, that he meant the people invested with the powers of government, and nothing else. It is true that *ought* is not predicable of an operation. But who would ever dream of raising any question about the *duties* of an operation? What did the Reviewer mean by saying, that a government could not be interested in doing right because it was interested in doing wrong? Can an operation be interested in either? And what did he mean by his comparison about the lion? Is a lion an operation incapable of pain or pleasure? And what did he mean by the expression, "other men," so obviously opposed to the word "government?" But let the public judge between us. It is superfluous to argue a point so clear.

The Reviewer does indeed seem to feel that his expressions cannot be explained away, and attempts to shuffle out of the difficulty by owning, that "the double meaning of the word government was not got clear of without confusion." He has now, at all events, he assures us, made himself master of Mr Bentham's philosophy. The real and genuine "greatest happiness principle" is, that the greatest happiness of every individual is identical with the greatest happiness of society; and all other "greatest happiness principles" whatever are counterfeits. "This," says he, "is the spirit of Mr Bentham's principle; and if there is anything opposed to it in any former statement it may be corrected by the present."

Assuredly, if a fair and honourable opponent had, in discussing a question so abstruse as that concerning the origin of moral obligation, made some unguarded admission inconsistent with the spirit of his doctrines, we should not be inclined to triumph over him. But no tenderness is due to a writer who, in the very act of confessing his blunders, insults those by whom his blunders have been detected, and accuses them of misunderstanding what, in fact, he has himself mis-stated.

The whole of this transaction illustrates excellently the real character of this sect. A paper comes forth, professing to contain a full development of the "greatest happiness principle," with the latest improvements of Mr Bentham. The writer boasts that his article has the honour of being the announcement and the organ of this wonderful discovery, which is to make "the bones of sages and patriots stir within their tombs."

This "magnificent principle" is then stated thus: Mankind ought to pursue their greatest happiness. But there are persons whose interest is opposed to the greatest happiness of mankind. *Ought* is not predicable of such persons. For the word *ought* has no meaning unless it be used with reference to some interest.

We answered, with much more lenity than we should have shown to such nonsense, had it not proceeded, as we supposed, from Mr Bentham, that interest was synonymous with greatest happiness; and that, therefore, if the word *ought* has no meaning, unless used with reference to interest, then, to say that mankind ought to pursue their greatest happiness, is simply to say, that the greatest happiness is the greatest happiness; that every individual pursues his own happiness; that either what he thinks his happiness must coincide with the greatest happiness of society or not; that, if what he thinks his happiness coincides with the greatest happiness of society, he will attempt to promote the greatest happiness of society whether he ever heard of the "greatest happiness principle" or not; and that, by the admission of the Westminster Reviewer, if his happiness is inconsistent with the greatest happiness of society, there is no reason why he should promote the greatest happiness of society. Now, that there are individuals who think that for their happiness which is not for the greatest happiness of society is evident. The Westminster Reviewer allowed that some of these individuals were in the right; and did not pretend to give any reason which could induce any one of them to think himself in the wrong. So that the "magnificent principle" turned out to be, either a truism or a contradiction in terms; either this maxim —"Do what you do;" or this maxim, "Do what you cannot do."

The Westminster Reviewer had the wit to see that he could not defend this palpable nonsense; but, instead of manfully owning that he had misunderstood the whole nature of the "greatest happiness principle" in the summer, and had obtained new light during the autumn, he attempts to withdraw the former principle unobserved, and to substitute another, directly opposed to it, in its place; clamouring all the time against our unfairness, like one who, while changing the cards, diverts the attention of the table from his sleight of hand by vociferating charges of foul play against other people.

The "greatest happiness principle" for the present quarter is then this,—that every individual will best promote his own happiness in this world, religious considerations being left out of the question, by promoting the greatest happiness of the whole species. And this principle, we are told, holds good with respect to kings and aristocracies as well as with other people.

"It is certain that the individual operators in any government, if they were thoroughly intelligent and entered into a perfect calculation of all existing chances, would seek for their own happiness in the promotion of the general; which brings them, if they knew it, under Mr Bentham's rule. The mistake of supposing the contrary, lies in confounding criminals who have had the luck to escape punishment with those who have the risk still before them. Suppose, for instance, a member of the House of Commons were at this moment to debate within himself, whether it would be for his ultimate happiness to begin, according to his ability, to misgovern. If he could be sure of being as lucky as some that are dead and gone, there might be difficulty in finding him an answer. But he is *not* sure ; and never can be, till he is dead. He does not know that he is not close upon the moment when misgovernment such as he is tempted to contemplate, will be made a terrible example of. It is not fair to pick out the instance of the thief that has died unhanged. The question is, whether thieving is at this moment an advisable trade to begin with all the possibilities of hanging not got over ? This is the spirit of Mr Bentham's principle ; and if there is anything opposed to it in any former statement, it may be corrected by the present."

We hope that we have now at last got to the real "magnificent principle,"—to the principle which is really to make "the bones of the sages and patriots stir." What effect it may produce on the bones of the dead we shall not pretend to decide ; but we are sure that it will do very little for the happiness of the living.

In the first place, nothing is more certain than this, that the Utilitarian theory of government, as developed in Mr Mill's Essay and in all the other works on the subject which have been put forth by the sect, rests on these two principles,—that men follow their interest, and that the interest of individuals may be, and in fact perpetually is, opposed to the interest of society. Unless these two principles be granted, Mr Mill's Essay does not contain one sound sentence. All his arguments against monarchy and aristocracy, all his arguments in favour of democracy, nay, the very argument by which he shows that there is any necessity for having government at all, must be rejected as utterly worthless.

This is so palpable that even the Westminster Reviewer, though not the most clear-sighted of men, could not help seeing it. Accordingly, he attempts to guard himself against the objection, after the manner of such reasoners, by committing two blunders instead of one. "All this," says he, "only shows that the members of a government would do well if they were all-wise," and he proceeds to tells us that, as rulers are not all-wise, they will invariably act against this principle wherever they can, so that the democratical checks will still be necessary to produce good government.

No form which human folly takes is so richly and exquisitely laughable as the spectacle of an Utilitarian in a dilemma. What earthly good can there be in a principle upon which no man will act until he is all-wise ? A certain most important doctrine, we are told, has been demonstrated so clearly that it ought to be the foundation of the science of government. And yet the whole frame of government is to be constituted exactly as if this fundamental doctrine were false, and on the supposition that no human being will ever act as if he believed it to be true !

The whole argument of the Utilitarians in favour of universal suffrage proceeds on the supposition that even the rudest and most uneducated men cannot, for any length of time, be deluded into acting against their own true interest. Yet now they tell us that, in all aristocratical communities, the higher and more educated class will, not occasionally, but invariably, act against its own interest. Now, the only use of proving anything, as far as we can see, is that people may believe it. To say that a man does what he believes to be against his happiness is a contradiction in terms. If, therefore, government and laws are to be constituted on the supposition on which Mr Mill's Essay is founded, that all individuals will, whenever they have power over others put into their hands, act in opposition to the general happiness, then government and laws must be constituted on the supposition that no individual believes, or ever will believe, his own happiness to be identical with the happiness of society. That is to say, government and laws are to be constituted on the supposition that no human being will ever be satisfied by Mr Bentham's proof of his "greatest happiness principle,"—a supposition which may be true enough, but which says little, we think, for the principle in question.

But where has this principle been demonstrated? We are curious, we confess, to see this demonstration which is to change the face of the world and yet is to convince nobody. The most amusing circumstance is that the Westminster Reviewer himself does not seem to know whether the principle has been demonstrated or not. "Mr Bentham," he says, "has demonstrated it, or at all events has laid such foundations that there is no trouble in demonstrating it." Surely it is rather strange that such a matter should be left in doubt. The Reviewer proposed, in his former article, a slight verbal emendation in the statement of the principle; he then announced that the principle had received its last improvement; and gloried in the circumstance that the Westminster Review had been selected as the organ of that improvement. Did it never occur to him that one slight improvement to a doctrine is to prove it?

Mr Bentham has not demonstrated the "greatest happiness principle," as now stated. He is far too wise a man to think of demonstrating any such thing. In those sections of his *Introduction to the Principles of Morals and Legislation*, to which the Reviewer refers us in his note, there is not a word of the kind. Mr Bentham says, most truly, that there are no occasions in which a man has not *some* motives for consulting the happiness of other men; and he proceeds to set forth what those motives are—sympathy on all occasions, and the love of reputation on most occasions. This is the very doctrine which we have been maintaining against Mr Mill and the Westminster Reviewer. The principal charge which we brought against Mr Mill was, that those motives to which Mr Bentham ascribes so much influence were quite left out of consideration in his theory. The Westminster Reviewer, in the very article now before us, abuses us for saying, in the spirit, and almost in the words of Mr Bentham, that "there is a certain check to the rapacity and cruelty of men in their desire of the good opinion of others." But does this principle, in which we fully agree with Mr Bentham, go the length of the new "greatest happiness principle?" The question is, not whether men have *some* motives for promoting the greatest happiness, but whether the *stronger* motives be those which impel them to promote the greatest happiness. That this would always be the case if men knew their own worldly interests is the assertion of the Reviewer. As he expresses some doubt whether Mr Bentham has demonstrated this or not, we would advise him to set the point at rest by giving his own demonstration.

The Reviewer has not attempted to give a general confirmation of the "greatest happiness principle;" but he has tried to prove that it holds good in one or two particular cases. And even in those particular cases he has utterly failed. A man, says he, who calculated the chances fairly would perceive that it would be for his greatest happiness to abstain from stealing; for a thief runs a greater risk of being hanged than an honest man.

It would have been wise, we think, in the Westminster Reviewer, before he entered on a discussion of this sort, to settle in what human happiness consists. Each of the ancient sects of philosophy held some tenet on this subject which served for a distinguishing badge. The *summum bonum* of the Utilitarians, as far as we can judge from the passage which we are now considering, is the not being hanged.

That it is an unpleasant thing to be hanged, we most willingly concede to our brother. But that the whole question of happiness or misery resolves itself into this single point, we cannot so easily admit. We must look at the thing purchased as well as the price paid for it. A thief, assuredly, runs a greater risk of being hanged than a labourer; and so an officer in the army runs a greater risk of being shot than a banker's clerk; and a governor of India runs a greater risk of dying of cholera than a lord of the bedchamber. But does it therefore follow that every man, whatever his habits or feelings may be, would, if he knew his own happiness, become a clerk rather than a cornet, or goldstick in waiting rather than governor of India?

Nothing can be more absurd than to suppose, like the Westminster Reviewer, that thieves steal only because they do not calculate the chances of being hanged as correctly as honest men. It never seems to have occurred to him as possible that a man may so greatly prefer the life of a thief to the life of a labourer that he may determine to brave the risk of detection and punishment, though he may even think that risk greater than it really is. And how, on Utilitarian principles, is such a man to be convinced that he is in the wrong? "You will be found out." —"Undoubtedly."—"You will be hanged within two years."—"I expect to be hanged within one year."—"Then why do you pursue this lawless mode of life?"—"Because I would rather live for one year with plenty of money, dressed like a gentleman, eating and drinking of the best, frequenting public places, and visiting a dashing mistress, than break stones on the road, or sit down to the loom, with the certainty of attaining a good old age. It is my humour. Are you answered?"

A king, says the Reviewer again, would govern well, if he were wise, for fear of provoking his subjects to insurrection. Therefore the true happiness of a king is identical with the greatest happiness of society. Tell Charles II. that, if he will be constant to his queen, sober at table, regular at prayers, frugal in his expenses, active in the transaction of business, if he will drive the herd of slaves, buffoons, and procurers from Whitehall, and make the happiness of his people the rule of his conduct, he will have a much greater chance of reigning in comfort to an advanced age; that his profusion and tyranny have exasperated his subjects, and may, perhaps, bring him to an end as terrible as his father's. He might answer, that he saw the danger, but that life was not worth having without ease and vicious pleasures. And what has our philosopher to say? Does he not see that it is no more possible to reason a man out of liking a short life and a merry one more than a long life and a dull one than to reason a Greenlander out of his train oil? We may say that the tastes of the thief and the tyrant differ from ours; but what right have we to say, looking at this world alone, that they do not pursue their greatest happiness very judiciously?

It is the grossest ignorance of human nature to suppose that another man calculates the chances differently from us, merely because he does what, in his place, we should not do. Every man has tastes and propensities, which he is disposed to gratify at a risk and expense which people of different temperaments and habits think extravagant. "Why," says Horace, "does one brother like to lounge in the forum, to play in the Campus, and to anoint himself in the baths, so well, that he would not put himself out of his way for all the wealth of the richest plantations of the East; while the other toils from sunrise to sunset for the purpose of increasing his fortune?" Horace attributes the diversity to the influence of the Genius and the natal star: and eighteen hundred years have taught us only to disguise our ignorance beneath a more philosophical language.

We think, therefore, that the Westminster Reviewer, even if we admit his calculation of the chances to be right, does not make out his case. But he appears to us to miscalculate chances more grossly than any person who ever acted or speculated in this world. "It is for the happiness," says he, "of a member of the House of Commons to govern well; for he never can tell that he is not close on the moment when misgovernment will be terribly punished: if he was sure that he should be as lucky as his predecessors, it might be for his happiness to misgovern; but he is not sure." Certainly a member of Parliament is not sure that he shall not be torn in pieces by a mob, or guillotined by a revolutionary tribunal for his opposition to reform. Nor is the Westminster Reviewer sure that he shall not be hanged for writing in favour of universal suffrage. We may have democratical massacres. We may also have aristocratical proscriptions. It is not very likely, thank God, that we should see either. But the radical, we think, runs as much danger as the aristocrat. As to our friend the Westminster Reviewer, he, it must be owned, has as good a right as any man on his side, "*Antonî gladios contemnere.*" But take the man whose votes, ever since he has sate in Parliament, have been the most uniformly bad, and oppose him to the man whose votes have been the most uniformly good. The Westminster Reviewer would probably select Mr Sadler and Mr Hume. Now, does any rational man think,—will the Westminster Reviewer himself say,—that Mr Sadler runs more risk of coming to a miserable end on account of his public conduct than Mr Hume? Mr Sadler does not know that he is not close on the moment when he will be made an example of; for Mr Sadler knows, if possible, less about the future than about the past. But he has no more reason to expect that he shall be made an example of than to expect that London will be swallowed up by an earthquake next spring; and it would be as foolish in him to act on the former supposition as on the latter. There is a risk; for there is a risk of everything which does not involve a contradiction; but it is a risk from which no man in his wits would give a shilling to be insured. Yet our Westminster Reviewer tells us that this risk alone, apart from all considerations of religion, honour or benevolence, would, as a matter of mere calculation, induce a wise member of the House of Commons to refuse any emoluments which might be offered him as the price of his support to pernicious measures.

We have hitherto been examining cases proposed by our opponent. It is now our turn to propose one; and we beg that he will spare no wisdom in solving it.

A thief is condemned to be hanged. On the eve of the day fixed for the execution a turnkey enters his cell and tells him that all is safe, that he has only to slip out, that his friends are waiting in the neighbourhood with disguises, and that a passage is taken for him in an American packet. Now, it is clearly for the greatest happiness of society that the thief should be hanged and the corrupt turnkey exposed and punished. Will the Westminster Reviewer tell us that it is for the greatest happiness of the thief to summon the head jailer and tell the whole story? Now, either it is for the greatest happiness of a thief to be hanged or it is not. If it is, then the argument, by which the Westminster Reviewer attempts to prove that men do not promote their own happiness by thieving, falls to the ground. If it is not, then there are men whose greatest happiness is at variance with the greatest happiness of the community.

To sum up our arguments shortly, we say that the "greatest happiness principle," as now stated, is diametrically opposed to the principle stated in the Westminster Review three months ago.

We say that, if the "greatest happiness principle," as now stated, be sound, Mr Mill's Essay, and all other works concerning Government which, like that Essay, proceed on the supposition that individuals may have an interest opposed to the greatest happiness of society, are fundamentally erroneous.

We say that those who hold this principle to be sound must be prepared to maintain, either that monarchs and aristocracies may be trusted to govern the community, or else that men cannot be trusted to follow their own interest when that interest is demonstrated to them.

We say that, if men cannot be trusted to follow their own interest when that interest has been demonstrated to them, then the Utilitarian arguments in favour of universal suffrage are good for nothing.

We say that the "greatest happiness principle" has not been proved; that it cannot be generally proved; that even in the particular cases selected by the Reviewer it is not clear that the principle is true; and that many cases might be stated in which the common sense of mankind would at once pronounce it to be false.

We now leave the Westminster Reviewer to alter and amend his "magnificent principle" as he thinks best. Unlimited, it is false. Properly limited, it will be barren. The "greatest happiness principle" of the 1st of July, as far as we could discern its meaning through a cloud of rodomontade, was an idle truism. The "greatest happiness principle" of the 1st of October is, in the phrase of the American newspapers, "important if true." But unhappily it is not true. It is not our business to conjecture what new maxim is to make the bones of sages and patriots stir on the 1st of December. We can only say that, unless it be something infinitely more ingenious than its two predecessors, we shall leave it unmolested. The Westminster Reviewer may, if he pleases, indulge himself like Sultan Schahriar with espousing a rapid succession of virgin theories. But we must beg to be excused from playing the part of the vizier who regularly attended on the day after the wedding to strangle the new Sultana.

The Westminster Reviewer charges us with urging it as an objection to the "greatest happiness principle" that "it is included in the Christian morality." This is a mere fiction of his own. We never attacked the morality of the Gospel. We blamed the Utilitarians for claiming the credit of a discovery, when they had merely stolen that morality, and spoiled it in the stealing. They have taken the precept of Christ and left the motive; and they demand the praise of a most wonderful and beneficial invention, when all that they have done has been to make a most useful maxim useless by separating it from its sanction. On religious principles it is true that every individual will best promote his own happiness by promoting the happiness of others. But if religious considerations be left out of the question it is not true. If we do not reason on the supposition of a future state, where is the motive? If we do reason on that supposition, where is the discovery?

The Westminster Reviewer tells us that "we wish to see the science of Government unsettled because we see no prospect of a settlement which accords with our interests." His angry eagerness to have questions settled resembles that of a judge in one of Dryden's plays—the Amphitryon, we think—who wishes to decide a cause after hearing only one party, and, when he has been at last compelled to listen to the statement of the defendant, flies into a passion, and exclaims, "There now, sir! See what you have done. The case was quite clear a minute ago; and you must come and puzzle it!" He is the zealot of a sect. We are searchers after truth. He wishes to have the question settled. We wish to have it sifted first. The querulous manner in which we have been blamed for attacking Mr Mill's system, and propounding no system of our own, reminds us of the horror with which that shallow dogmatist, Epicurus, the worst parts of whose nonsense the Utilitarians have attempted to revive, shrank from the keen and searching scepticism of the second Academy.

It is not our fault that an experimental science of vast extent does not admit of being settled by a short demonstration; that the subtilty of nature, in the moral as in the physical world, triumphs over the subtilty of syllogism. The quack, who declares on affidavit that, by using his pills and attending to his printed directions, hundreds who had been dismissed incurable from the hospitals have renewed their youth like the eagles, may, perhaps, think that Sir Henry Halford, when he feels the pulses of patients, inquires about their symptoms, and prescribes a different remedy to each, is unsettling the science of medicine for the sake of a fee.

If, in the course of this controversy, we have refrained from expressing any opinion respecting the political institutions of England, it is not because we have not an opinion, or because we shrink from avowing it. The Utilitarians, indeed, conscious that their boasted theory of government would not bear investigation, were desirous to turn the dispute about Mr Mill's Essay into a dispute about the Whig party, rotten boroughs, unpaid magistrates, and ex-officio informations. When we blamed them for talking nonsense, they cried out that they were insulted for being reformers,—just as poor Ancient Pistol swore that the scars which he had received from the cudgel of Fluellen were got in the Gallia wars. We, however, did not think it desirable to mix up political questions, about which the public mind is violently agitated, with a great problem in moral philosophy.

Our notions about Government are not, however, altogether unsettled. We have an opinion about parliamentary reform, though we have not arrived at that opinion by the royal road which Mr Mill has opened for the explorers of political science. As we are taking leave, probably for the last time, of this controversy, we will state very concisely what our doctrines are. On some future occasion we may, perhaps, explain and defend them at length.

Our fervent wish, and we will add our sanguine hope, is that we may see such a reform of the House of Commons as may render its votes the express image of the opinion of the middle orders of Britain. A pecuniary qualification we think absolutely necessary; and in settling its amount, our object would be to draw the line in such a manner that every decent farmer and shopkeeper might possess the elective franchise. We should wish to see an end put to all the advantages which particular forms of property possess over other forms, and particular portions of property over other equal portions. And this would content us. Such a reform would, according to Mr Mill, establish an aristocracy of wealth, and leave the community without protection and exposed to all the evils of unbridled power. Most willingly would we stake the whole controversy between us on the success of the experiment which we propose.

SADLER'S LAW OF POPULATION.

(JULY 1830.)

The Law of Population; a Treatise in Six Books, in Disproof of the Superfecundity of Human Beings, and developing the real Principle of their Increase. By MICHAEL THOMAS SADLER, M.P. 2 vols. 8vo. London: 1830.

WE did not expect a good book from Mr Sadler: and it is well that we did not; for he has given us a very bad one. The matter of his treatise is extraordinary; the manner more extraordinary still. His arrangement is confused, his repetitions endless, his style everything which it ought not to be. Instead of saying what he has to say with the perspicuity, the precision, and the simplicity in which consists the eloquence proper to scientific writing, he indulges without measure in vague, bombastic declamation, made up of those fine things which boys of fifteen admire, and which everybody, who is not destined to be a boy all his life, weeds vigorously out of his compositions after five-and-twenty. That portion of his two thick volumes which is not made up of statistical tables, consists principally of ejaculations, apostrophes, metaphors, similes,—all the worst of their respective kinds. His thoughts are dressed up in this shabby finery with so much profusion and so little discrimination, that they remind us of a company of wretched strolling players, who have huddled on suits of ragged and faded tinsel, taken from a common wardrobe, and fitting neither their persons nor their parts; and who then exhibit themselves to the laughing and pitying spectators, in a state of strutting, ranting, painted, gilded beggary. "Oh, rare Daniels!" "Political economist, go and do thou likewise!" "Hear, ye political economists and anti-populationists!" "Population, if not proscribed and worried down by the Cerberean dogs of this wretched and cruel system, really does press against the level of the means of subsistence, and still elevating that level, it continues thus to urge society through advancing stages, till at length the strong and resistless hand of necessity presses the secret spring of human prosperity, and the portals of Providence fly open, and disclose to the enraptured gaze the promised land of contented and rewarded labour." These are specimens, taken at random, of Mr Sadler's eloquence. We could easily multiply them; but our readers, we fear, are already inclined to cry for mercy.

Much blank verse and much rhyme is also scattered through these volumes, sometimes rightly quoted, sometimes wrongly,—sometimes good, sometimes insufferable,—sometimes taken from Shakspeare, and sometimes, for aught we know, Mr Sadler's own. "Let man," cries the philosopher, "take heed how he rashly violates his trust;" and thereupon he breaks forth into singing as follows:

> "What myriads wait in destiny's dark womb,
> Doubtful of life or an eternal tomb!
> 'Tis his to blot them from the book of fate,
> Or, like a second Deity, create;

> To dry the stream of being in its source,
> Or bid it, widening, win its restless course;
> While, earth and heaven replenishing, the flood
> Rolls to its Ocean fount, and rests in God."

If these lines are not Mr Sadler's, we heartily beg his pardon for our suspicion—a suspicion which, we acknowledge, ought not to be lightly entertained of any human being. We can only say that we never met with them before, and that we do not much care how long it may be before we meet with them, or with any others like them, again.

The spirit of this work is as bad as its style. We never met with a book which so strongly indicated that the writer was in a good humour with himself, and in a bad humour with everybody else; which contained so much of that kind of reproach which is vulgarly said to be no slander, and of that kind of praise which is vulgarly said to be no commendation. Mr Malthus is attacked in language which it would be scarcely decent to employ respecting Titus Oates. "Atrocious," "execrable," "blasphemous," and other epithets of the same kind, are poured forth against that able, excellent, and honourable man, with a profusion which in the early part of the work excites indignation, but, after the first hundred pages, produces mere weariness and nausea. In the preface, Mr Sadler excuses himself on the plea of haste. Two-thirds of his book, he tells us, were written in a few months. If any terms have escaped him which can be construed into personal disrespect, he shall deeply regret that he had not more time to revise them. We must inform him that the tone of his book required a very different apology; and that a quarter of a year, though it is a short time for a man to be engaged in writing a book, is a very long time for a man to be in a passion.

The imputation of being in a passion Mr Sadler will not disclaim. His is a theme, he tells us, on which "it were impious to be calm;" and he boasts that, "instead of conforming to the candour of the present age, he has imitated the honesty of preceding ones, in expressing himself with the utmost plainness and freedom throughout." If Mr Sadler really wishes that the controversy about his new principle of population should be carried on with all the license of the seventeenth century, we can have no personal objections. We are quite as little afraid of a contest in which quarter shall be neither given nor taken as he can be. But we would advise him seriously to consider, before he publishes the promised continuation of his work, whether he be not one of that class of writers who stand peculiarly in need of the candour which he insults, and who would have most to fear from that unsparing severity which he practises and recommends.

There is only one excuse for the extreme acrimony with which this book is written; and that excuse is but a bad one. Mr Sadler imagines that the theory of Mr Malthus is inconsistent with Christianity, and even with the purer forms of Deism. Now, even had this been the case, a greater degree of mildness and self-command than Mr Sadler has shown would have been becoming in a writer who had undertaken to defend the religion of charity. But, in fact, the imputation which has been thrown on Mr Malthus and his followers is so absurd as scarcely to deserve an answer. As it appears, however, in almost every page of Mr Sadler's book, we will say a few words respecting it.

Mr Sadler describes Mr Malthus's principle in the following words:—

"It pronounces that there exists an evil in the principle of population; an evil, not accidental, but inherent; not of occasional occurrence, but in perpetual operation; not light, transient, or mitigated, but productive of miseries, compared with which all those inflicted by human institutions, that is to say, by the weakness and wickedness of man, however instigated, are 'light;' an evil, finally, for which there is no remedy save one, which had been long overlooked, and which is now enunciated in terms which evince anything rather than confidence. It is a principle, moreover, pre-eminently bold, as well as 'clear.' With a presumption, to call it by no fitter name, of which it may be doubted whether literature, heathen or Christian, furnishes a parallel, it professes to trace this supposed evil to its source, 'the laws of nature, which are those of God;' thereby implying, and indeed asserting, that the law by which the Deity multiplies his offspring, and that by which he makes provision for their sustentation, are different, and, indeed, irreconcilable."

"This theory," he adds, "in the plain apprehension of the many, lowers the character of the Deity in that attribute, which, as Rousseau has well observed, is the most essential to him, his goodness; or otherwise, impugns his wisdom."

Now nothing is more certain than that there is physical and moral evil in the world. Whoever, therefore, believes, as we do most firmly believe, in the goodness of God, must believe that there is no incompatibility between the goodness of God and the existence of physical and moral evil. If, then, the goodness of God be not incompatible with the existence of physical and moral evil, on what grounds does Mr Sadler maintain that the goodness of God is incompatible with the law of population laid down by Mr Malthus?

Is there any difference between the particular form of evil which would be produced by over-population, and other forms of evil which we know to exist in the world? It is, says Mr Sadler, not a light or transient evil, but a great and permanent evil. What then? The question of the origin of evil is a question of ay or no,—not a question of more or less. If any explanation can be found by which the slightest inconvenience ever sustained by any sentient being can be reconciled with the divine attribute of benevolence, that explanation will equally apply to the most dreadful and extensive calamities that can ever afflict the human race. The difficulty arises from an apparent contradiction in terms; and that difficulty is as complete in the case of a headache which lasts for an hour as in the case of a pestilence which unpeoples an empire,—in the case of the gust which makes us shiver for a moment as in the case of the hurricane in which an Armada is cast away.

It is, according to Mr Sadler, an instance of presumption unparalleled in literature, heathen or Christian, to trace an evil to "the laws of nature, which are those of God," as its source. Is not hydrophobia an evil? And is it not a law of nature that hydrophobia should be communicated by the bite of a mad dog? Is not malaria an evil? And is it not a law of nature that in particular situations the human frame should be liable to malaria? We know that there is evil in the world. If it is not to be traced to the laws of nature, how did it come into the world? Is it supernatural? And, if we suppose it to be supernatural, is not the difficulty of reconciling it with the divine attributes as great as if we suppose it to be natural? Or, rather, what do the words natural and supernatural mean when applied to the operations of the Supreme Mind?

Mr Sadler has attempted, in another part of his work, to meet these obvious arguments, by a distinction without a difference.

"The scourges of human existence, as necessary regulators of the numbers of mankind, it is also agreed by some, are not inconsistent with the wisdom or benevolence of the Governor of the universe ; though such think that it is a mere after-concern to 'reconcile the undeniable state of the fact to the attributes we assign to the Deity.' 'The purpose of the earthquake,' say they, 'the hurricane, the drought, or the famine, by which thousands, and sometimes almost millions, of the human race, are at once overwhelmed, or left the victims of lingering want, is certainly inscrutable.' How singular is it that a sophism like this, so false, as a mere illustration, should pass for an argument, as it has long done ! The principle of population is declared to be naturally productive of evils to mankind, and as having that constant and manifest tendency to increase their numbers beyond the means of their subsistence, which has produced the unhappy and disgusting consequences so often enumerated. This is, then, its universal tendency or rule. But is there in Nature the same constant tendency to these earthquakes, hurricanes, droughts, and famines, by which so many myriads, if not millions, are overwhelmed or reduced at once to ruin ? No ; these awful events are strange exceptions to the ordinary course of things ; their visitations are partial, and they occur at distant intervals of time. While Religion has assigned to them a very solemn office, Philosophy readily refers them to those great and benevolent principles of Nature by which the universe is regulated. But were there a constantly operating tendency to these calamitous occurrences ; did we feel the earth beneath us tremulous, and giving ceaseless and certain tokens of the coming catastrophe of Nature ; were the hurricane heard mustering its devastating powers, and perpetually muttering around us ; were the skies 'like brass,' without a cloud to produce one genial drop to refresh the thirsty earth, and famine, consequently, visibly on the approach ; I say, would such a state of things, as resulting from the constant laws of Nature, be 'reconcilable with the attributes we assign to the Deity,' or with any attributes which in these inventive days could be assigned to him, so as to represent him as anything but the tormentor, rather than the kind benefactor, of his creatures ? Life, in such a condition, would be like the unceasingly threatened and miserable existence of Damocles at the table of Dionysius, and the tyrant himself the worthy image of the Deity of the anti-populationists."

Surely this is wretched trifling. Is it on the number of bad harvests, or of volcanic eruptions, that this great question depends ? Mr Sadler's piety, it seems, would be proof against one rainy summer, but would be overcome by three or four in succession. On the coasts of the Mediterranean, where earthquakes are rare, he would be an optimist. South America would make him a sceptic, and Java a decided Manichean. To say that religion assigns a solemn office to these visitations is nothing to the purpose. Why was man so constituted as to need such warnings ? It is equally unmeaning to say that philosophy refers these events to benevolent general laws of nature. In so far as the laws of nature produce evil, they are clearly not benevolent. They may produce much good. But why is this good mixed with evil ? The most subtle and powerful intellects have been labouring for centuries to solve these difficulties. The true solution, we are inclined to think, is that which has been rather suggested, than developed, by Paley and Butler. But there is not one solution which will not apply quite as well to the evils of over-population as to any other evil. Many excellent people think that it is presumptuous to meddle with such high questions at all, and that, though there doubtless is an explanation, our faculties are not sufficiently enlarged to comprehend that explanation. This mode of getting rid of the difficulty, again, will apply quite as well to the evils of over-population as to any other evils. We are sure that those who humbly confess their inability to expound the great enigma act more rationally and more decorously than Mr Sadler, who tells us, with the utmost confidence, which are the means and which the ends,—which the exceptions and which the rules, in the government of the universe;—who consents to bear a little evil without denying the divine benevolence, but distinctly announces that a certain quantity of dry weather or stormy weather would force him to regard the Deity as the tyrant of his creatures.

The great discovery by which Mr Sadler has, as he conceives, vindicated the ways of Providence is enounced with all the pomp of capital letters. We must particularly beg that our readers will peruse it with attention.

> "No one fact relative to the human species is more clearly ascertained, whether by general observation or actual proof, than that their fecundity varies in different communities and countries. The principle which effects this variation, without the necessity of those cruel and unnatural expedients so frequently adverted to, constitutes what I presume to call THE LAW OF POPULATION; and that law may be thus briefly enunciated:—
>
> "THE PROLIFICNESS OF HUMAN BEINGS, OTHERWISE SIMILARLY CIRCUMSTANCED, VARIES INVERSELY AS THEIR NUMBERS.
>
> "The preceding definition may be thus amplified and explained. Premising, as a mere truism, that marriages under precisely similar circumstances will, on the average, be equally fruitful everywhere, I proceed to state, first, that the prolificness of a given number of marriages will, all other circumstances being the same, vary in proportion to the condensation of the population, so that that prolificness shall be greatest where the numbers on an equal space are the fewest, and, on the contrary, the smallest where those numbers are the largest."

Mr Sadler, at setting out, abuses Mr Malthus for enouncing his theory in terms taken from the exact sciences. "Applied to the mensuration of human fecundity," he tells us, "the most fallacious of all things is geometrical demonstration;" and he again informs us that those "act an irrational and irreverent part who affect to measure the mighty depth of God's mercies by their arithmetic, and to demonstrate, by their geometrical ratios, that it is inadequate to receive and contain the efflux of that fountain of life which is in Him."

It appears, however, that it is not to the use of mathematical words, but only to the use of those words in their right senses that Mr Sadler objects. The law of inverse variation, or inverse proportion, is as much a part of mathematical science as the law of geometric progression. The only difference in this respect between Mr Malthus and Mr Sadler is, that Mr Malthus knows what is meant by geometric progression, and that Mr Sadler has not the faintest notion of what is meant by inverse variation. Had he understood the proposition which he has enounced with so much pomp, its ludicrous absurdity must at once have flashed on his mind.

Let it be supposed that there is a tract in the back settlements of America, or in New South Wales, equal in size to London, with only a single couple, a man and his wife, living upon it. The population of London, with its immediate suburbs, is now probably about a million and a half. The average fecundity of a marriage in London is, as Mr Sadler tells us, 2·35. How many children will the woman in the back settlements bear according to Mr Sadler's theory? The solution of the problem is easy. As the population in this tract in the back settlements is to the population of London, so will be the number of children born from a marriage in London to the number of children born from the marriage of this couple in the back settlements. That is to say—

2 : 1,500,000 : : 2·35 : 1,762,500.

The lady will have 1,762,500 children: a large "efflux of the fountain of life," to borrow Mr Sadler's sonorous rhetoric, as the most philoprogenitive parent could possibly desire.

But let us, instead of putting cases of our own, look at some of those which Mr Sadler has brought forward in support of his theory. The following table, he tells us, exhibits a striking proof of the truth of his main position. It seems to us to prove only that Mr Sadler does not know what inverse proportion means.

Countries.	Inhabitants on a Square Mile, about	Children to a Marriage.
Cape of Good Hope	1	5·48
North America	4	5·22
Russia in Europe...	23	4·94
Denmark	73	4·89
Prussia	100	4·70
France	140	4·22
England	160	3·66

Is 1 to 160 as 3·66 to 5·48? If Mr Sadler's principle were just, the number of children produced by a marriage at the Cape would be, not 5·48, but very near 600. Or take America and France. Is 4 to 140 as 4·22 to 5·22? The number of births to a marriage in North America ought, according to this proportion, to be about 150.

Mr Sadler states the law of population in England thus:—

"Where the inhabitants are found to be on the square mile,

From 50 to 100 (2 counties) the births to 100 marriages are	420
— 100 to 150 (9 counties)	396
— 150 to 200 (16 counties)	390
— 200 to 250 (4 counties)	388
— 250 to 300 (5 counties)	378
— 300 to 350 (3 counties)	353
— 500 to 600 (2 counties)	331
—4000 and upwards (1 county)	246

"Now, I think it quite reasonable to conclude, that, were there not another document in existence relative to this subject, the facts thus deduced from the census of England are fully sufficient to demonstrate the position, that the fecundity of human beings varies inversely as their numbers. How, I ask, can it be evaded?"

What, we ask, is there to evade? Is 246 to 420 as 50 to 4000? Is 331 to 396 as 100 to 500? If the law propounded by Mr Sadler were correct, the births to a hundred marriages in the least populous part of England, would be $\frac{246 \times 4000}{50}$, that is 19,680,—nearly two hundred children to every mother. But we will not carry on these calculations. The absurdity of Mr Sadler's proposition is so palpable that it is unnecessary to select particular instances. Let us see what are the extremes of population and fecundity in well-known countries. The space which Mr Sadler generally takes is a square mile. The population at the Cape of Good Hope is, according to him, one to the square mile. That of London is two hundred thousand to the square mile. The number of children at the Cape, Mr Sadler informs us, is 5·48 to a marriage. In London, he states it at 2·35 to a marriage. Now how can that of which all the variations lie between 2·35 and 5·48 vary, either directly or inversely, as that which admits of all the variations between one and two hundred thousand? Mr Sadler evidently does not know the meaning of the word proportion. A million is a larger quantity than ten. A hundred is a larger quantity than five. Mr Sadler thinks, therefore, that there is no impropriety in saying that a hundred is to five as a million is to ten, or in the inverse ratio of ten to a million. He proposes to prove that the fecundity of marriages varies in inverse proportion to the density of the population. But all that he attempts to prove is that, while the population increases from one to a hundred and sixty on the square mile, the fecundity will diminish from 5·48 to 3·66; and that again, while the population increases from one hundred and sixty to two hundred thousand on the square mile, the fecundity will diminish from 3·66 to 2·35.

The proposition which Mr Sadler enounces, without understanding the words which he uses, would indeed, if it could be proved, set us at ease as to the dangers of over-population. But it is, as we have shown, a proposition so grossly absurd that it is difficult for any man to keep his countenance while he repeats it. The utmost that Mr Sadler has ever attempted to prove is this,—that the fecundity of the human race diminishes as population becomes more condensed,—but that the diminution of fecundity bears a very small ratio to the increase of population,—so that, while the population on a square mile is multiplied two hundred-thousand-fold, the fecundity decreases by little more than one half.

Does this principle vindicate the honour of God? Does it hold out any new hope or comfort to man? Not at all. We pledge ourselves to show, with the utmost strictness of reasoning, from Mr Sadler's own principles, and from facts of the most notorious description, that every consequence which follows from the law of geometrical progression, laid down by Mr Malthus, will follow from the law, miscalled a law of inverse variation, which has been laid down by Mr Sadler.

London is the most thickly peopled spot of its size in the known world. Therefore the fecundity of the population of London must, according to Mr Sadler, be less than the fecundity of human beings living on any other spot of equal size. Mr Sadler tells us, that "the ratios of mortality are influenced by the different degrees in which the population is condensated; and that, other circumstances being similar, the relative number of deaths in a thinly-populated, or country district, is less than that which takes place in towns, and in towns of a moderate size less again than that which exists in large and populous cities." Therefore the mortality in London must, according to him, be greater than in other places. But, though, according to Mr Sadler, the fecundity is less in London than elsewhere, and though the mortality is greater there than elsewhere, we find that even in London the number of births greatly exceeds the number of deaths. During the ten years which ended with 1820, there were fifty thousand more baptisms than burials within the bills of mortality. It follows, therefore, that, even within London itself, an increase of the population is taking place by internal propagation.

Now, if the population of a place in which the fecundity is less and the mortality greater than in other places still goes on increasing by propagation, it follows that in other places the population will increase, and increase still faster. There is clearly nothing in Mr Sadler's boasted law of fecundity which will keep the population from multiplying till the whole earth is as thick with human beings as St Giles's parish. If Mr Sadler denies this, he must hold that, in places less thickly peopled than London, marriages may be less fruitful than in London, which is directly contrary to his own principles; or that in places less thickly peopled than London, and similarly situated, people will die faster than in London, which is again directly contrary to his own principles. Now, if it follows, as it clearly does follow, from Mr Sadler's own doctrines, that the human race might be stowed together by three or four hundred to the acre, and might still, as far as the principle of propagation is concerned, go on increasing, what advantage, in a religious or moral point of view, has his theory over that of Mr Malthus? The principle of Mr Malthus, says Mr Sadler, leads to consequences of the most frightful description. Be it so. But do not all these consequences spring equally from his own principle? Revealed religion condemns Mr Malthus. Be it so. But Mr Sadler must share in the reproach of heresy. The theory of Mr Malthus represents the Deity as a Dionysius hanging the sword over the heads of his trembling slaves. Be it so. But under what rhetorical figure are we to represent the Deity of Mr Sadler?

A man who wishes to serve the cause of religion ought to hesitate long before he stakes the truth of religion on the event of a controversy respecting facts in the physical world. For a time he may succeed in making a theory which he dislikes unpopular by persuading the public that it contradicts the Scriptures and is inconsistent with the attributes of the Deity. But, if at last an overwhelming force of evidence proves this maligned theory to be true, what is the effect of the arguments by which the objector has attempted to prove that it is irreconcilable with natural and revealed religion? Merely this, to make men infidels. Like the Israelites, in their battle with the Philistines, he has presumptuously and without warrant brought down the ark of God into the camp as a means of ensuring victory:—and the consequence of this profanation is that, when the battle is lost, the ark is taken.

In every age the Church has been cautioned against this fatal and impious rashness by its most illustrious members,—by the fervid Augustin, by the subtle Aquinas, by the all-accomplished Pascal. The warning has been given in vain. That close alliance which, under the disguise of the most deadly enmity, has always subsisted between fanaticism and atheism is still unbroken. At one time, the cry was,—"If you hold that the earth moves round the sun, you deny the truth of the Bible." Popes, conclaves, and religious orders, rose up against the Copernican heresy. But, as Pascal said, they could not prevent the earth from moving, or themselves from moving along with it. One thing, however, they could do, and they did. They could teach numbers to consider the Bible as a collection of old women's stories which the progress of civilisation and knowledge was refuting one by one. They had attempted to show that the Ptolemaic system was as much a part of Christianity as the resurrection of the dead. Was it strange, then, that, when the Ptolemaic system became an object of ridicule to every man of education in Catholic countries, the doctrine of the resurrection should be in peril? In the present generation, and in our own country, the prevailing system of geology has been, with equal folly, attacked on the ground that it is inconsistent with the Mosaic dates. And here we have Mr Sadler, out of his especial zeal for religion, first proving that the doctrine of superfecundity is irreconcilable with the goodness of God, and then laying down principles, and stating facts, from which the doctrine of superfecundity necessarily follows. This blundering piety reminds us of the adventures of a certain missionary who went to convert the inhabitants of Madagascar. The good father had an audience of the king, and began to instruct his majesty in the history of the human race as given in the Scriptures. "Thus, sir," said he, "was woman made out of the rib of man, and ever since that time a woman has had one rib more than a man." "Surely, father, you must be mistaken there," said the king. "Mistaken!" said the missionary. "It is an indisputable fact. My faith upon it! My life upon it!" The good man had heard the fact asserted by his nurse when he was a child,—had always considered it as a strong confirmation of the Scriptures, and fully believed it without having ever thought of verifying it. The king ordered a man and woman, the leanest that could be found, to be brought before him, and desired his spiritual instructor to count their ribs. The father counted over and over, upward and downward, and still found the same number in both. He then cleared his throat, stammered, stuttered, and began to assure the king that though he had committed a little error in saying that a woman had more ribs than a man, he was quite right in saying that the first woman was made out of the rib of the first man. "How can I tell that?" said the king. "You come to me with a strange story which you say is revealed to you from heaven. I have already made you confess that one half of it is a lie: and how can you have the face to expect that I shall believe the other half?"

We have shown that Mr Sadler's theory, if it be true, is as much a theory of superfecundity as that of Mr Malthus. But it is not true. And from Mr Sadler's own tables we will prove that it is not true.

The fecundity of the human race in England Mr Sadler rates as follows:—

"Where the inhabitants are found to be on the square mile—

From 50 to 100 (2 counties) the births to 100 marriages are	420
— 100 to 150 (9 counties)	396
— 150 to 200 (16 counties)	390
— 200 to 250 (4 counties)	388
— 250 to 300 (5 counties)	378
— 300 to 350 (3 counties)	353
— 500 to 600 (2 counties)	331
— 4000 and upwards (1 county)	246

Having given this table, he begins, as usual, to boast and triumph. "Were there not another document on the subject in existence," says he, "the facts thus deduced from the census of England are sufficient to demonstrate the position, that the fecundity of human beings varies inversely as their numbers." In no case would these facts demonstrate that the fecundity of human beings varies inversely as their numbers in the right sense of the words inverse variation. But certainly they would, "if there were no other document in existence," appear to indicate something like what Mr Sadler means by inverse variation. Unhappily for him, however, there are other documents in existence; and he has himself furnished us with them. We will extract another of his tables:—

TABLE LXIV.

Showing the Operation of the Law of Population in the different Hundreds of the County of Lancaster.

Hundreds.	Population on each Square Mile.	Square Miles.	Population in 1821, exclusive of Towns of separate Jurisdiction.	Marriages from 1811 to 1821.	Baptisms from 1811 to 1821.	Baptisms to 100 Marriages.
Lonsdale.....	96	441	42,486	3,651	16,129	442
Almondness.	267	228	60,930	3,670	15,228	415
Leyland......	354	126	44,583	2,858	11,182	391
West Derby.	409	377	154,040	24,182	86,407	357
Blackburn ...	513	286	146,608	10,814	31,463	291
Salford.......	869	373	322,592	40,143	114,941	286

Mr Sadler rejoices much over this table. The results, he says, have surprised himself; and, indeed, as we shall show, they might well have done so.

The result of his inquiries with respect to France he presents in the following table:—

"The legitimate births are, in those departments where there are to each inhabitant—

From 4 to 5 hects.	(2 departs.) to every 1000 marriages	5130
3 to 4 ...	(3 do.)	4372
2 to 3 ...	(30 do.)	4250
1 to 2 ...	(44 do.)	4234
·06 to 1 ...	(5 do.)	4146
and ·06 ...	(1 do.)	2557

Then comes the shout of exultation as regularly as the *Gloria Patri* at the end of a Psalm. "Is there any possibility of gainsaying the conclusions these facts force upon us; namely that the fecundity of marriages is regulated by the density of the population, and inversely to it?"

Certainly these tables, taken separately, look well for Mr Sadler's theory. He must be a bungling gamester who cannot win when he is suffered to pack the cards his own way. We must beg leave to shuffle them a little; and we will venture to promise our readers that some curious results will follow from the operation. In nine counties of England, says Mr Sadler, in which the population is from 100 to 150 on the square mile, the births to 100 marriages are 396. He afterwards expresses some doubt as to the accuracy of the documents from which this estimate has been formed, and rates the number of births as high as 414. Let him take his choice. We will allow him every advantage.

In the table which we have quoted, numbered lxiv., he tells us that in Almondness, where the population is 267 to the square mile, there are 415 births to 100 marriages. The population of Almondness is twice as thick as the population of the nine counties referred to in the other table. Yet the number of births to a marriage is greater in Almondness than in those counties.

Once more, he tells us that in three counties, in which the population was from 300 to 350 on the square mile, the births to 100 marriages were 353. He afterwards rates them at 375. Again we say, let him take his choice. But from his table of the population of Lancashire it appears that, in the hundred of Leyland, where the population is 354 to the square mile, the number of births to 100 marriages is 391. Here again we have the marriages becoming more fruitful as the population becomes denser.

Let us now shuffle the censuses of England and France together. In two English counties which contain from 50 to 100 inhabitants on the square mile, the births to 100 marriages are, according to Mr Sadler, 420. But in forty-four departments of France, in which there are from one to two hecatares to each inhabitant, that is to say, in which the population is from 125 to 250 or rather more, to the square mile, the number of births to 100 marriages is 423 and a fraction.

Again, in five departments of France in which there is less than one hecatare to each inhabitant, that is to say, in which the population is more than 250 to the square mile, the number of births to 100 marriages is 414 and a fraction. But in the four counties of England in which the population is from 200 to 250 on the square mile, the number of births to 100 marriages is, according to one of Mr Sadler's tables, only 388, and by his very highest estimate no more than 402.

Mr Sadler gives us a long table of all the towns of England and Ireland, which, he tells us, irrefragably demonstrates his principle. We assert, and will prove, that these tables are alone sufficient to upset his whole theory.

It is very true that, in the great towns the number of births to a marriage appears to be smaller than in the less populous towns. But we learn some other facts from these tables which we should be glad to know how Mr Sadler will explain. We find that the fecundity in towns of fewer than 3000 inhabitants is actually much greater than the average fecundity of the kingdom, and that the fecundity in towns of between 3000 and 4000 inhabitants is at least as great as the average fecundity of the kingdom. The average fecundity of a marriage in towns of fewer than 3000 inhabitants is about four; in towns of between 3000 and 4000 inhabitants it is 3·60. Now, the average fecundity of England, when it contained only 160 inhabitants to a square mile, and when, therefore, according to the new law of population, the fecundity must have been greater than it now is, was only, according to Mr Sadler, 3·66 to a marriage. To proceed,—the fecundity of a marriage in the English towns of between 4000 and 5000 inhabitants is stated at 3·56. But, when we turn to Mr Sadler's table of the counties, we find the fecundity of a marriage in Warwickshire and Staffordshire rated at only 3·48, and in Lancashire and Surrey at only 3·41.

These facts disprove Mr Sadler's principle; and the fact on which he lays so much stress—that the fecundity is less in the great towns than in the small towns—does not tend in any degree to prove his principle. There is not the least reason to believe that the population is more dense, *on a given space,* in London or Manchester than in a town of 4000 inhabitants. But it is quite certain that the population is more dense in a town of 4000 inhabitants than in Warwickshire or Lancashire. That the fecundity of Manchester is less than the fecundity of Sandwich or Guildford is a circumstance which has nothing whatever to do with Mr Sadler's theory. But that the fecundity of Sandwich is greater than the average fecundity of Kent,—that the fecundity of Guildford is greater than the average fecundity of Surrey,—as from his own tables appears to be the case,—these are facts utterly inconsistent with his theory.

We need not here examine why it is that the human race is less fruitful in great cities than in small towns or in the open country. The fact has long been notorious. We are inclined to attribute it to the same causes which tend to abridge human life in great cities,—to general sickliness and want of tone, produced by close air and sedentary employments. Thus far, and thus far only, we agree with Mr Sadler, that, when population is crowded together in such masses that the general health and energy of the frame are impaired by the condensation, and by the habits attending on the condensation, then the fecundity of the race diminishes. But this is evidently a check of the same class with war, pestilence, and famine. It is a check for the operation of which Mr Malthus has allowed.

That any condensation which does not affect the general health will affect fecundity, is not only not proved—it is disproved—by Mr Sadler's own tables.

Mr Sadler passes on to Prussia, and sums up his information respecting that country as follows :—

Inhabitants on a Square Mile, German.	Number of Provinces.	Births to 100 Marriages, 1754.	Births to 100 Marriages, 1784.	Births to 100 Marriages, Busching.
Under 1000	2	434	472	503
1000 to 2000	4	414	455	454
2000 to 3000	6	384	424	426
3000 to 4000	2	365	408	394

After the table comes the boast as usual :

"Thus is the law of population deduced from the registers of Prussia also : and were the argument to pause here, it is conclusive. The results obtained from the registers of this and the preceding countries, exhibiting, as they do most clearly, the principle of human increase, it is utterly impossible should have been the work of chance; on the contrary, the regularity with which the facts class themselves in conformity with that principle, and the striking analogy which the whole of them bear to each other, demonstrate equally the design of Nature, and the certainty of its accomplishment."

We are sorry to disturb Mr Sadler's complacency. But, in our opinion, this table completely disproves his whole principle. If we read the columns perpendicularly, indeed, they seem to be in his favour. But how stands the case if we read horizontally? Does Mr Sadler believe that, during the thirty years which elapsed between 1754 and 1784, the population of Prussia had been diminishing? No fact in history is better ascertained than that, during the long peace which followed the seven years' war, it increased with great rapidity. Indeed, if the fecundity were what Mr Sadler states it to have been, it must have increased with great rapidity. Yet, the ratio of births to marriages is greater in 1784 than in 1754, and that in every province. It is, therefore, perfectly clear that the fecundity does not diminish whenever the density of the population increases.

We will try another of Mr Sadler's tables:

TABLE LXXXI.

Showing the Estimated Prolificness of Marriages in England at the close of the Seventeenth Century.

Places.	Number of Inhabitants.	One Annual Marriage, to	Number of Marriages	Children to one Marriage.	Total Number of Births.
London	530,000	106	5,000	4·	20,000
Large Towns	870,000	128	6,800	4·5	30,000
Small Towns and Country Places	4,100,000	141	29,200	4·8	140,160
	5,500,000	134	41,000	4·65	190,760

Standing by itself, this table, like most of the others, seems to support Mr Sadler's theory. But surely London, at the close of the seventeenth century, was far more thickly peopled than the kingdom of England now is. Yet the fecundity in London at the close of the seventeenth century was 4; and the average fecundity of the whole kingdom now is not more, according to Mr Sadler, than 3½. Then again, the large towns in 1700 were far more thickly peopled than Westmoreland and the North Riding of Yorkshire now are. Yet the fecundity in those large towns was then 4·5. And Mr Sadler tells us that it is now only 4·2 in Westmoreland and the North Riding.

It is scarcely necessary to say anything about the censuses of the Netherlands, as Mr Sadler himself confesses that there is some difficulty in reconciling them with his theory, and helps out his awkward explanation by supposing, quite gratuitously, as it seems to us, that the official documents are inaccurate. The argument which he has drawn from the United States will detain us but for a very short time. He has not told us,—perhaps he had not the means of telling us,—what proportion the number of births in the different parts of that country bears to the number of marriages. He shows that in the thinly peopled states the number of children bears a greater proportion to the number of grown-up people than in the old states; and this, he conceives, is a sufficient proof that the condensation of the population is unfavourable to fecundity. We deny the inference altogether. Nothing can be more obvious than the explanation of the phenomenon. The back settlements are for the most part peopled by emigration from the old states; and emigrants are almost always breeders. They are almost always vigorous people in the prime of life. Mr Sadler himself, in another part of his book, in which he tries very unsuccessfully to show that the rapid multiplication of the people of America is principally owing to emigration from Europe, states this fact in the plainest manner:

> "Nothing is more certain, than that emigration is almost universally supplied by 'single persons in the beginning of mature life;' nor, secondly, that such persons, as Dr. Franklin long ago asserted, 'marry and raise families.'
>
> "Nor is this all. It is not more true, that emigrants, generally speaking, consist of individuals in the prime of life, than that 'they are the most active and vigorous' of that age, as Dr Seybert describes them to be. They are, as it respects the principle at issue, a select class, even compared with that of their own age, generally considered. Their very object in leaving their native countries is to settle in life, a phrase that needs no explanation; and they do so. No equal number of human beings, therefore, have ever given so large or rapid an increase to a community as 'settlers' have invariably done."

It is perfectly clear that children are more numerous in the back settlements of America than in the maritime states, not because unoccupied land makes people prolific, but because the most prolific people go to the unoccupied land.

Mr Sadler having, as he conceives, fully established his theory of population by statistical evidence, proceeds to prove, "that it is in unison, or rather required by the principles of physiology." The difference between himself and his opponents he states as follows:—

> "In pursuing this part of my subject, I must begin by reminding the reader of the difference between those who hold the superfecundity of mankind and myself, in regard to those principles which will form the basis of the present argument. They contend, that production precedes population; I, on the contrary, maintain that population precedes, and is indeed the cause of, production. They teach that man breeds up to the capital, or in proportion to the abundance of the food, he possesses: I assert, that he is comparatively sterile when he is wealthy, and that he breeds in proportion to his poverty; not meaning, however, by that poverty, a state of privation approaching to actual starvation, any more than, I suppose, they would contend, that extreme and culpable excess is the grand patron of population. In a word, they hold that a state of ease and affluence is the great promoter of prolificness. I maintain that

a considerable degree of labour, and even privation, is a more efficient cause of an increased degree of human fecundity."

To prove this point, he quotes Aristotle, Hippocrates, Dr Short, Dr Gregory, Dr Perceval, M. Villermi, Lord Bacon, and Rousseau. We will not dispute about it ; for it seems quite clear to us that if he succeeds in establishing it he overturns his own theory. If men breed in proportion to their poverty, as he tells us here,—and at the same time breed in inverse proportion to their numbers, as he told us before,—it necessarily follows that the poverty of men must be in inverse proportion to their numbers. Inverse proportion, indeed, as we have shown, is not the phrase which expresses Mr Sadler's meaning. To speak more correctly, it follows, from his own positions, that, if one population be thinner than another, it will also be poorer. Is this the fact? Mr Sadler tells us, in one of those tables which we have already quoted, that in the United States the population is four to a square mile, and the fecundity 5·22 to a marriage, and that in Russia the population is twenty-three to a square mile, and the fecundity 4·94 to a marriage. Is the North American labourer poorer than the Russian boor? If not, what becomes of Mr Sadler's argument?

The most decisive proof of Mr Sadler's theory, according to him, is that which he has kept for the last. It is derived from the registers of the English Peerage. The peers, he says, and says truly, are the class with respect to whom we possess the most accurate statistical information.

"Touching their *number*, this has been accurately known and recorded ever since the order has existed in the country. For several centuries past, the addition to it of a single individual has been a matter of public interest and notoriety : this hereditary honour conferring not personal dignity merely, but important privileges, and being almost always identified with great wealth and influence. The records relating to it are kept with the most scrupulous attention, not only by heirs and expectants, but they are appealed to by more distant connections, as conferring distinction on all who can claim such affinity. Hence there are few disputes concerning successions to this rank, but such as go back to very remote periods. In later times, the marriages, births, and deaths, of the nobility, have not only been registered by and known to those personally interested, but have been published periodically, and, consequently, subject to perpetual correction and revision ; while many of the most powerful motives which can influence the human mind conspire to preserve these records from the slightest falsification. Compared with these, therefore, all other registers, or reports, whether of sworn searchers or others, are incorrectness itself."

Mr Sadler goes on to tell us that the peers are a marrying class, and that their general longevity proves them to be a healthy class. Still peerages often become extinct ;—and from this fact he infers that they are a sterile class. So far, says he, from increasing in geometrical progression, they do not even keep up their numbers. "Nature interdicts their increase."

"Thus," says he, "in all ages of the world, and in every nation of it, have the highest ranks of the community been the most sterile, and the lowest the most prolific. As it respects our own country, from the lowest grade of society, the Irish peasant, to the highest, the British peer, this remains a conspicuous truth ; and the regulation of the degree of fecundity conformably to this principle, through the intermediate gradations of society, constitutes one of the features of the system developed in these pages."

We take the issue which Mr Sadler has himself offered. We agree with him, that the registers of the English Peerage are of far higher authority than any other statistical documents. We are content that by those registers his principle should be judged. And we meet him by positively denying his facts. We assert that the English nobles are not only not a sterile, but an eminently prolific, part of the community. Mr Sadler concludes that they are sterile, merely because peerages often become extinct. Is this the proper way of ascertaining the point? Is it thus that he avails himself of those registers on the accuracy and fulness of which he descants so largely ? Surely his right course would have been to count the marriages, and the number of births in the Peerage. This he has not done ;—but we have done it. And what is the result ?

It appears from the last edition of Debrett's *Peerage*, published in 1828, that there were at that time 287 peers of the United Kingdom, who had been married once or oftener. The whole number of marriages contracted by these 287 peers was 333. The number of children by these marriages was 1437,—more than five to a peer,—more than 4·3 to a marriage,—more, that is to say, than the average number in those counties of England in which, according to Mr Sadler's own statement, the fecundity is the greatest.

But this is not all. These marriages had not, in 1828, produced their full effect. Some of them had been very lately contracted. In a very large proportion of them there was every probability of additional issue. To allow for this probability, we may safely add one to the average which we have already obtained, and rate the fecundity of a noble marriage in England at 5·3 ;—higher than the fecundity which Mr Sadler assigns to the people of the United States. Even if we do not make this allowance, the average fecundity of the marriages of peers is higher by one-fifth than the average fecundity of marriages throughout the kingdom. And this is the sterile class ! This is the class which "Nature has interdicted from increasing!" The evidence to which Mr Sadler has himself appealed proves that his principle is false,—utterly false,—wildly and extravagantly false. It proves that a class, living during half of every year in the most crowded population in the world, breeds faster than those who live in the country ;—that the class which enjoys the greatest degree of luxury and ease breeds faster than the class which undergoes labour and privation. To talk a little in Mr Sadler's style, we must own that we are ourselves surprised at the results which our examination of the peerage has brought out. We certainly should have thought that the habits of fashionable life, and long residence even in the most airy parts of so great a city as London, would have been more unfavourable to the fecundity of the higher orders than they appear to be.

Peerages, it is true, often become extinct. But it is quite clear, from what we have stated, that this is not because peeresses are barren. There is no difficulty in discovering what the causes really are. In the first place, most of the titles of our nobles are limited to heirs male ; so that, though the average fecundity of a noble marriage is upwards of five, yet, for the purpose of keeping up a peerage, it cannot be reckoned at much more than two and a half. Secondly, though the peers are, as Mr Sadler says, a marrying class, the younger sons of peers are decidedly not a marrying class; so that a peer, though he has at least as great a chance of having a son as his neighbours, has less chance than they of having a collateral heir.

We have now disposed, we think, of Mr Sadler's principle of population. Our readers must, by this time, be pretty well satisfied as to his qualifications for setting up theories of his own. We will, therefore, present them with a few instances of the skill and fairness which he shows when he undertakes to pull down the theories of other men. The doctrine of Mr Malthus, that population, if not checked by want, by vice, by excessive mortality, or by the prudent self-denial of individuals, would increase in a geometric progression, is, in Mr Sadler's opinion, at once false and atrocious.

"It may at once be denied," says he, "that human increase proceeds geometrically; and for this simple but decisive reason, that the existence of a geometrical ratio of increase in the works of nature is neither true nor possible. It would fling into utter confusion all order, time, magnitude, and space."

This is as curious a specimen of reasoning as any that has been offered to the world since the days when theories were founded on the principle that nature abhors a vacuum. We proceed a few pages farther, however; and we then find that geometric progression is unnatural only in those cases in which Mr Malthus conceives that it exists; and that, in all cases in which Mr Malthus denies the existence of a geometric ratio, nature changes sides, and adopts that ratio as the rule of increase.

Mr Malthus holds that subsistence will increase only in an arithmetical ratio. "As far as nature has to do with the question," says Mr Sadler, "men might, for instance, plant twice the number of peas, and breed from a double number of the same animals, with equal prospect of their multiplication." Now, if Mr Sadler thinks that, as far as nature is concerned, four sheep will double as fast as two, and eight as fast as four, how can he deny that the geometrical ratio of increase does exist in the works of nature? Or has he a definition of his own for geometrical progression, as well as for inverse proportion?

Mr Malthus, and those who agree with him, have generally referred to the United States, as a country in which the human race increases in a geometrical ratio, and have fixed on thirty-five years as the term in which the population of that country doubles itself. Mr Sadler contends that it is physically impossible for a people to double in twenty-five years; nay, that thirty-five years is far too short a period,—that the Americans do not double by procreation in less than forty-seven years,—and that the rapid increase of their numbers is produced by emigration from Europe.

Emigration has certainly had some effect in increasing the population of the United States. But so great has the rate of that increase been that, after making full allowance for the effect of emigration, there will be a residue, attributable to procreation alone, amply sufficient to double the population in twenty-five years.

Mr Sadler states the results of the four censuses as follows:—

"There were, of white inhabitants, in the whole of the United States in 1790, 3,093,111; in 1800, 4,309,656; in 1810, 5,862,093; and in 1820, 7,861,710. The increase, in the first term, being 39 per cent.;

that in the second, 36 per cent.; and that in the third and last, 33 per cent. It is superfluous to say, that it is utterly impossible to deduce the geometric theory of human increase, whatever be the period of duplication, from such terms as these."

Mr Sadler is a bad arithmetician. The increase in the last term is not as he states it, 33 per cent., but more than 34 per cent. Now, an increase of 32 per cent. in ten years, is more than sufficient to double the population in twenty-five years. And there is, we think, very strong reason to believe that the white population of the United States does increase by 32 per cent. every ten years.

Our reason is this. There is in the United States a class of persons whose numbers are not increased by emigration,—the negro slaves. During the interval which elapsed between the census of 1810 and the census of 1820, the change in their numbers must have been produced by procreation, and by procreation alone. Their situation, though much happier than that of the wretched beings who cultivate the sugar plantations of Trinidad and Demerara, cannot be supposed to be more favourable to health and fecundity than that of free labourers. In 1810, the slave-trade had been but recently abolished; and there were in consequence many more male than female slaves,—a circumstance, of course, very unfavourable to procreation. Slaves are perpetually passing into the class of freemen; but no freeman ever descends into servitude; so that the census will not exhibit the whole effect of the procreation which really takes place.

We find, by the census of 1810, that the number of slaves in the Union was then 1,191,000. In 1820, they had increased to 1,538,000. That is to say, in ten years, they had increased 29 per cent.—within three per cent. of that rate of increase which would double their numbers in twenty-five years. We may, we think, fairly calculate that, if the female slaves had been as numerous as the males, and if no manumissions had taken place, the census of the slave population would have exhibited an increase of 32 per cent. in ten years.

If we are right in fixing on 32 per cent. as the rate at which the white population of America increases by procreation in ten years, it will follow that, during the last ten years of the eighteenth century, nearly one-sixth of the increase was the effect of emigration; from 1800 to 1810, about one-ninth; and from 1810 to 1820, about one-seventeenth. This is what we should have expected; for it is clear that, unless the number of emigrants be constantly increasing, it must, as compared with the resident population, be relatively decreasing. The number of persons added to the population of the United States by emigration, between 1810 and 1820, would be nearly 120,000. From the data furnished by Mr Sadler himself, we should be inclined to think that this would be a fair estimate.

"Dr Seybert says, that the passengers to ten of the principal ports of the United States, in the year 1817, amounted to 22,235; of whom 11,977 were from Great Britain and Ireland; 4164 from Germany and Holland; 1245 from France; 58 from Italy; 2901 from the British possessions in North America; 1569 from the West Indies; and from all other countries, 321. These, however, we may conclude, with the editor of Styles's Register, were far short of the number that arrived."

We have not the honour of knowing either Dr Seybert or the editor of Styles's Register. We cannot, therefore, decide on their respective claims to our confidence so peremptorily as Mr Sadler thinks fit to do. Nor can we agree to what Mr Sadler very gravely assigns as a reason for disbelieving Dr Seybert's testimony. "Such accounts," he says, "if not wilfully exaggerated, must always fall short of the truth." It would be a curious question of casuistry to determine what a man ought to do in a case in which he cannot tell the truth except by being guilty of wilful exaggeration. We will, however, suppose, with Mr Sadler, that Dr Seybert, finding himself compelled to choose between two sins, preferred telling a falsehood to exaggerating; and that he has consequently underrated the number of emigrants. We will take it at double of the Doctor's estimate, and suppose that, in 1817, 45,000 Europeans crossed to the United States. Now, it must be remembered that the year 1817 was a year of the severest and most general distress over all Europe,—a year of scarcity everywhere, and of cruel famine in some places. There can, therefore, be no doubt that the emigration of 1817 was very far above the average, probably more than three times that of an ordinary year. Till the year 1815, the war rendered it almost impossible to emigrate to the United States either from England or from the Continent. If we suppose the average emigration of the remaining years to have been 16,000, we shall probably not be much mistaken. In 1818 and 1819, the number was certainly much beyond that average; in 1815 and 1816, probably much below it. But, even if we were to suppose that, in every year from the peace to 1820, the number of emigrants had been as high as we have supposed it to be in 1817, the increase by procreation among the white inhabitants of the United States would still appear to be about 30 per cent. in ten years.

Mr Sadler acknowledges that Cobbett exaggerates the number of emigrants when he states it at 150,000 a year. Yet even this estimate, absurdly great as it is, would not be sufficient to explain the increase of the population of the United States on Mr Sadler's principles. He is, he tells us, "convinced that doubling in 35 years is a far more rapid duplication than ever has taken place in that country from procreation only." An increase of 20 per cent. in ten years, by procreation, would therefore be the very utmost that he would allow to be possible. We have already shown, by reference to the census of the slave population, that this doctrine is quite absurd. And, if we suppose it to be sound, we shall be driven to the conclusion that above eight hundred thousand people emigrated from Europe to the United States in a space of little more than five years. The whole increase of the white population from 1810 to 1820 was within a few hundreds of 2,000,000. If we are to attribute to procreation only 20 per cent. on the number returned by the census of 1810, we shall have about 830,000 persons to account for in some other way;—and to suppose that the emigrants who went to America between the peace of 1815 and the census of 1820, with the children who were born to them there, would make up that number, would be the height of absurdity.

We could say much more; but we think it quite unnecessary at present. We have shown that Mr Sadler is careless in the collection of facts,—that he is incapable of reasoning on facts when he has collected them,—that he does not understand the simplest terms of science,—that he has enounced a proposition of which he does not know the meaning,—that the proposition which he means to enounce, and which he tries to prove, leads directly to all those consequences which he represents as impious and immoral,—and that, from the very documents to which he has himself appealed, it may be demonstrated that his theory is false. We may, perhaps, resume the subject when his next volume appears. Meanwhile, we hope that he will delay its publication until he has learned a little arithmetic, and unlearned a great deal of eloquence.

SADLER'S REFUTATION REFUTED.

(JANUARY 1831.)

A Refutation of an Article in the Edinburgh Review (No. CII.) *entitled, "Sadler's Law of Population, and disproof of Human Superfecundity;" containing also Additional Proofs of the Principle enunciated in that Treatise, founded on the Censuses of different Countries recently published.* By MICHAEL THOMAS SADLER, M.P. 8vo. London: 1830.

" Before anything came out against my Essay, I was told I must prepare myself for a storm coming against it, it being resolved by some men that it was necessary that book of mine should, as it is phrased, be run down."—JOHN LOCKE.

WE have, in violation of our usual practice, transcribed Mr Sadler's title-page from top to bottom, motto and all. The parallel implied between the Essay on the Human Understanding and the Essay on Superfecundity is exquisitely laughable. We can match it, however, with mottoes as ludicrous. We remember to have heard of a dramatic piece, entitled "News from Camperdown," written soon after Lord Duncan's victory, by a man once as much in his own good graces as Mr Sadler is, and now as much forgotten as Mr Sadler will soon be, Robert Heron. His piece was brought upon the stage, and damned, "as it is phrased," in the second act; but the author, thinking that it had been unfairly and unjustly "run down," published it, in order to put his critics to shame, with this motto from Swift: "When a true genius appears in the world, you may know him by this mark—that the dunces are all in confederacy against him." We remember another anecdote, which may perhaps be acceptable to so zealous a churchman as Mr Sadler. A certain Antinomian preacher, the oracle of a barn, in a county of which we do not think it proper to mention the name, finding that divinity was not by itself a sufficiently lucrative profession, resolved to combine with it that of dog-stealing. He was, by ill-fortune, detected in several offences of this description, and was in consequence brought before two justices, who, in virtue of the powers given them by an act of parliament, sentenced him to a whipping for each theft. The degrading punishment inflicted on the pastor naturally thinned the flock; and the poor man was in danger of wanting bread. He accordingly put forth a handbill solemnly protesting his innocence, describing his sufferings, and appealing to the Christian charity of the public; and to his pathetic address he prefixed this most appropriate text: "Thrice was I beaten with rods.—*St Paul's Epistle to the Corinthians.*" He did not perceive that, though St Paul had been scourged, no number of whippings, however severe, will of themselves entitle a man to be considered as an apostle. Mr Sadler seems to us to have fallen into a somewhat similar error. He should remember that, though Locke may have been laughed at, so has Sir Claudius Hunter; and that it takes something more than the laughter of all the world to make a Locke.

The body of this pamphlet by no means justifies the parallel so modestly insinuated on the title-page. Yet we must own that, though Mr Sadler has not risen to the level of Locke, he has done what was almost as difficult, if not as honourable—he has fallen below his own. He is at best a bad writer. His arrangement is an elaborate confusion. His style has been constructed, with great care, in such a manner as to produce the least possible effect by means of the greatest possible number of words. Aspiring to the exalted character of a Christian philosopher, he can never preserve through a single paragraph either the calmness of a philosopher or the meekness of a Christian. His ill-nature would make a very little wit formidable. But, happily, his efforts to wound resemble those of a juggler's snake. The bags of poison are full, but the fang is wanting. In this foolish pamphlet, all the unpleasant peculiarities of his style and temper are brought out in the strongest manner. He is from the beginning to the end in a paroxysm of rage, and would certainly do us some mischief if he knew how. We will give a single instance for the present. Others will present themselves as we proceed. We laughed at some doggerel verses which he cited, and which we, never having seen them before, suspected to be his own. We are now sure that if the principle on which Solomon decided a famous case of filiation were correct, there can be no doubt as to the justice of our suspicion. Mr Sadler, who, whatever elements of the poetical character he may lack, possesses the poetical irritability in an abundance which might have sufficed for Homer himself, resolved to retaliate on the person, who, as he supposed, had reviewed him. He has, accordingly, ransacked some collection of college verses, in the hope of finding, among the performances of his supposed antagonist, something as bad as his own. And we must in fairness admit that he has succeeded pretty well. We must admit that the gentleman in question sometimes put into his exercises, at seventeen, almost as great nonsense as Mr Sadler is in the habit of putting into his books at sixty.

Mr Sadler complains that we have devoted whole pages to mere abuse of him. We deny the charge. We have, indeed, characterised, in terms of just reprehension, that spirit which shows itself in every part of his prolix work. Those terms of reprehension we are by no means inclined to retract ; and we conceive that we might have used much stronger expressions, without the least offence either to truth or to decorum. There is a limit prescribed to us by our sense of what is due to ourselves. But we think that no indulgence is due to Mr Sadler. A writer who distinctly announces that he has not conformed to the candour of the age—who makes it his boast that he expresses himself throughout with the greatest plainness and freedom—and whose constant practice proves that by plainness and freedom he means coarseness and rancour—has no right to expect that others shall remember courtesies which he has forgotten, or shall respect one who has ceased to respect himself.

Mr Sadler declares that he has never vilified Mr Malthus personally, and has confined himself to attacking the doctrines which that gentleman maintains. We should wish to leave that point to the decision of all who have read Mr Sadler's book, or any twenty pages of it. To quote particular instances of a temper which penetrates and inspires the whole work, is to weaken our charge. Yet, that we may not be suspected of flinching, we will give two specimens,—the two first which occur to our recollection. "Whose minister is it that speaks thus ?" says Mr Sadler, after misrepresenting in a most extraordinary manner, though, we are willing to believe, unintentionally, one of the positions of Mr Malthus. "Whose minister is it that speaks thus ? That of the lover and avenger of little children ?"

Again, Mr Malthus recommends, erroneously perhaps, but assuredly from humane motives, that alms, when given, should be given very sparingly. Mr Sadler quotes the recommendation, and adds the following courteous comment :—"The tender mercies of the wicked are cruel." We cannot think that a writer who indulges in these indecent and unjust attacks on professional and personal character has any right to complain of our sarcasms on his metaphors and rhymes.

We will now proceed to examine the reply which Mr Sadler has thought fit to make to our arguments. He begins by attacking our remarks on the origin of evil. They are, says he, too profound for common apprehension ; and he hopes that they are too profound for our own. That they seem profound to him we can well believe. Profundity, in its secondary as in its primary sense, is a relative term. When Grildrig was nearly drowned in the Brobdignagian cream-jug he doubtless thought it very deep. But to common apprehension our reasoning would, we are persuaded, appear perfectly simple.

The theory of Mr Malthus, says Mr Sadler, cannot be true, because it asserts the existence of a great and terrible evil, and is therefore inconsistent with the goodness of God. We answer thus. We know that there are in the world great and terrible evils. In spite of these evils, we believe in the goodness of God. Why may we not then continue to believe in his goodness, though another evil should be added to the list ?

How does Mr Sadler answer this ? Merely by telling us, that we are too wicked to be reasoned with. He completely shrinks from the question ; a question, be it remembered, not raised by us—a question which we should have felt strong objections to raising unnecessarily—a question put forward by himself, as intimately connected with the subject of his two ponderous volumes. He attempts to carp at detached parts of our reasoning on the subject. With what success he carries on this guerilla war after declining a general action with the main body of our argument our readers shall see.

> "The Reviewer sends me to Paley, who is, I confess, rather more intelligible on the subject, and who, fortunately, has decided the very point in dispute. I will first give the words of the Reviewer, who, when speaking of my general argument regarding the magnitude of the evils, moral and physical, implied in the theory I oppose, sums up his ideas thus :—'Mr Sadler says, that it is not a light or transient evil, but a great and permanent evil. What then? The question of the origin of evil is a question of ay or no,—*not a question of* MORE *or* LESS.' But what says Paley? His express rule is this, that 'when we cannot resolve all appearances into benevolence of design, *we make the* FEW *give place to the* MANY, *the* LITTLE *to the* GREAT ; *that we take our judgment from a large and decided preponderancy.*' Now in weighing these two authorities, directly at issue on this point, I think there will be little trouble in determining which we shall make 'to give place ;' or, if we 'look to a large and decided preponderancy' of either talent, learning, or benevolence, from whom we shall 'take our judgment.' The effrontery, or, to speak more charitably, the ignorance of a reference to Paley on this subject, and in this instance, is really marvellous."

Now, does not Mr Sadler see that the very words which he quotes from Paley contain in themselves a refutation of his whole argument ? Paley says, indeed, as every man in his senses would say, that in a certain case, which he has specified, the more and the less come into question. But in what case? "When we *cannot* resolve all appearances into the benevolence of design." It is better that there should be a little evil than a great deal of evil. This is self-evident. But it is also self-evident, that no evil is better than a little evil. Why, then, is there any evil? It is a mystery which we cannot solve. It is a mystery which Paley, by the very words which Mr Sadler has quoted, acknowledges himself unable to solve; and it is because he cannot solve that mystery that he proceeds to take into consideration the more and the less. Believing in the divine goodness, we must necessarily believe that the evils which exist are necessary to avert greater evils. But what those greater evils are, we do not know. How the happiness of any part of the sentient creation would be in any respect diminished if, for example, children cut their teeth without pain, we cannot understand. The case is exactly the same with the principle of Mr Malthus. If superfecundity exists, it exists, no doubt, because it is a less evil than some other evil which otherwise would exist. Can Mr Sadler prove that this is an impossibility?

One single expression which Mr Sadler employs on this subject is sufficient to show how utterly incompetent he is to discuss it. "On the Christian hypothesis," says he, "no doubt exists as to the origin of evil." He does not, we think, understand what is meant by the origin of evil. The Christian Scriptures profess to give no solution of that mystery. They relate facts: but they leave the metaphysical question undetermined. They tell us that man fell; but why he was not so constituted as to be incapable of falling, or why the Supreme Being has not mitigated the consequences of the Fall more than they actually have been mitigated, the Scriptures did not tell us, and, it may without presumption be said, could not tell us, unless we had been creatures different from what we are. There is something, either in the nature of our faculties or in the nature of the machinery employed by us for the purpose of reasoning, which condemns us, on this and similar subjects, to hopeless ignorance. Man can understand these high matters only by ceasing to be man, just as a fly can understand a lemma of Newton only by ceasing to be a fly. To make it an objection to the Christian system that it gives us no solution of these difficulties, is to make it an objection to the Christian system that it is a system formed for human beings. Of the puzzles of the Academy, there is not one which does not apply as strongly to Deism as to Christianity, and to Atheism as to Deism. There are difficulties in everything. Yet we are sure that something must be true.

If revelation speaks on the subject of the origin of evil it speaks only to discourage dogmatism and temerity. In the most ancient, the most beautiful, and the most profound of all works on the subject, the Book of Job, both the sufferer who complains of the divine government, and the injudicious advisers who attempt to defend it on wrong principles, are silenced by the voice of supreme wisdom, and reminded that the question is beyond the reach of the human intellect. St Paul silences the supposed objector, who strives to force him into controversy, in the same manner. The church has been, ever since the apostolic times, agitated by this question, and by a question which is inseparable from it, the question of fate and free-will. The greatest theologians and philosophers have acknowledged that these things were too high for them, and have contented themselves with hinting at what seemed to be the most probable solution. What says Johnson? "All our effort ends in belief that for the evils of life there is some good reason, and in confession that the reason cannot be found." What says Paley? "Of the origin of evil no universal solution has been discovered. I mean no solution which reaches to all cases of complaint.—The consideration of general laws, although it may concern the question of the origin of evil very nearly, which I think it does, rests in views disproportionate to our faculties, and in a knowledge which we do not possess. It serves rather to account for the obscurity of the subject, than to supply us with distinct answers to our difficulties." What says presumptuous ignorance? "No doubt whatever exists as to the origin of evil." It is remarkable that Mr Sadler does not tell us what his solution is. The world, we suspect, will lose little by his silence.

He falls on the reviewer again.

> "Though I have shown," says he, "and on authorities from which none can lightly differ, not only the cruelty and immorality which this system necessarily involves, but its most revolting feature, its gross partiality, he has wholly suppressed this, the most important part of my argument; as even the bare notice of it would have instantly exposed the sophistry to which he has had recourse. If, however, he would fairly meet the whole question, let him show me that 'hydrophobia,' which he gives as an example of the laws of God and nature, is a calamity to which the poor alone are liable; or that 'malaria,' which, with singular infelicity, he has chosen as an illustration of the fancied evils of population, is a respecter of persons."

We said nothing about this argument, as Mr Sadler calls it, merely because we did not think it worth while; and we are half ashamed to say anything about it now. But, since Mr Sadler is so urgent for an answer, he shall have one. If there is evil, it must be either partial or universal. Which is the better of the two? Hydrophobia, says this great philosopher, is no argument against the divine goodness, because mad dogs bite rich and poor alike; but if the rich were exempted, and only nine people suffered for ten who suffer now, hydrophobia would forthwith, simply because it would produce less evil than at present, become an argument against the divine goodness! To state such a proposition, is to refute it. And is not the malaria a respecter of persons? It infests Rome. Does it infest London? There are complaints peculiar to the tropical countries. There are others which are found only in mountainous districts; others which are confined to marshy regions; others again which run in particular families. Is not this partiality? Why is it more inconsistent with the divine goodness that poor men should suffer an evil from which rich men are exempt, than that a particular portion of the community should inherit gout, scrofula, insanity, and other maladies? And are there no miseries under which, in fact, the poor alone are suffering? Mr Sadler himself acknowledges, in this very paragraph, that there are such; but he tells us that these calamities are the effects of misgovernment, and that this misgovernment is the effect of political economy. Be it so. But does he not see that he is only removing the difficulty one step further? Why does Providence suffer men, whose minds are filled with false and pernicious notions, to have power in the state? For good ends, we doubt not, if the fact be so; but for ends inscrutable to us, who see only a small part of the vast scheme, and who see that small part only for a short period. Does Mr Sadler doubt that the Supreme Being has power as absolute over the revolutions of political as over the organisation of natural bodies? Surely not: and, if not, we do not see that he vindicates the ways of Providence by attributing the distresses, which the poor, as he confesses, endure, to an error in legislation rather than to a law of physiology. Turn the question as we may, disguise it as we may, we shall find that it at last resolves itself into the same great enigma,—the origin of physical and moral evil: an enigma which the highest human intellects have given up in despair, but which Mr Sadler thinks himself perfectly able to solve.

He next accuses us of having paused long on verbal criticism. We certainly did object to his improper use of the words "inverse variation." Mr Sadler complains of this with his usual bitterness.

> "Now what is the Reviewer's quarrel with me on this occasion? That he does not understand the meaning of my terms? No. He acknowledges the contrary. That I have not fully explained the sense in which I have used them? No. An explanation, he knows, is immediately subjoined, though he has carefully suppressed it. That I have varied the sense in which I have applied them? No. I challenge him to show it. But he nevertheless goes on for many pages together in arguing against what he knows, and, in fact, acknowledges, I did not mean; and then turns round and argues again, though much more feebly, indeed, against what he says I did mean! Now, even had I been in error as to the use of a word, I appeal to the reader whether such an unworthy and disingenuous course would not, if generally pursued, make controversy on all subjects, however important, that into which, in such hands, it always degenerates—a dispute about words."

The best way to avoid controversies about words is to use words in their proper senses. Mr Sadler may think our objection captious; but how he can think it disingenuous we do not well understand. If we had represented him as meaning what we knew that he did not mean, we should have acted in a disgraceful manner. But we did not represent him, and he allows that we did not represent him, as meaning what he did not mean. We blamed him, and with perfect justice and propriety, for saying what he did not mean. Every man has in one sense a right to define his own terms; that is to say, if he chooses to call one two, and two seven, it would be absurd to charge him with false arithmetic for saying that seven is the double of one. But it would be perfectly fair to blame him for changing the established sense of words. The words, "inverse variation," in matters not purely scientific, have often been used in the loose way in which Mr Sadler has used them. But we shall be surprised if he can find a single instance of their having been so used in a matter of pure arithmetic.

We will illustrate our meaning thus. Lord Thurlow, in one of his speeches about Indian affairs, said that one Hastings was worth twenty Macartneys. He might, with equal propriety, have said ten Macartneys, or a hundred Macartneys. Nor would there have been the least inconsistency in his using all the three expressions in one speech. But would this be an excuse for a financier who, in a matter of account, should reason as if ten, twenty, and a hundred were the same number?

Mr Sadler tells us that he purposely avoided the use of the word proportion in stating his principle. He seems, therefore, to allow that the word proportion would have been improper. Yet he did in fact employ it in explaining his principle, accompanied with an awkward explanation intended to signify that, though he said proportion, he meant something quite different from proportion. We should not have said so much on this subject either in our former article, or at present, but that there is in all Mr Sadler's writings an air of scientific pedantry, which renders his errors fair game. We will now let the matter rest; and, instead of assailing Mr Sadler with our verbal criticism, proceed to defend ourselves against his literal criticism.

"The Reviewer promised his readers that some curious results should follow from his shuffling. We will enable him to keep his word.

"'In two English counties,' says he, 'which contain from 50 to 100 inhabitants on the square mile, the births to 100 marriages are, according to Mr Sadler, 420; but in 44 departments of France, in which there are from one to two hecatares [*hectares*] to each inhabitant, that is to say, in which the population is from 125 to 250, or rather more, to the square mile, the number of births to one hundred marriages is 423 and a fraction.'

"The first curious result is, that our Reviewer is ignorant, not only of the name, but of the extent, of a French hectare; otherwise he is guilty of a practice which, even if transferred to the gambling-table, would, I presume, prevent him from being allowed ever to shuffle, even there, again. He was most ready to pronounce upon a mistake of one per cent. in a calculation of mine, the difference in no wise affecting the argument in hand; but here I must inform him, that his error, whether wilfully or ignorantly put forth, involves his entire argument.

"The French hectare I had calculated to contain $107{,}708\frac{67}{100}$ English square feet, or $2\frac{47265}{100000}$ acres; Dr Kelly takes it, on authority which he gives, at $107{,}644\frac{143923}{1000000}$ English square feet, or $2\frac{471169}{1000000}$ acres. The last French *Annuaires*, however, state it, I perceive, as being equal to $2\frac{473614}{1000000}$ acres. The difference is very trifling, and will not in the slightest degree cover our critic's error. The first calculation gives about $258\frac{83}{100}$ hectares to an English square mile; the second, $258\frac{73}{100}$; the last, or French calculation $258\frac{98}{100}$. When, therefore, the Reviewer calculates the population of the departments of France thus: 'from one to two hectares to each inhabitant, that is to say, in which the population is from 125 to 250, or rather more, to the square mile; his '*that is to say*,' is that which he ought not to have said—no rare case with him, as we shall show throughout."

We must inform Mr Sadler, in the first place, that we inserted the vowel which amuses him so much, not from ignorance or from carelessness, but advisedly, and in conformity with the practice of several respectable writers. He will find the word hecatare in Ree's Cyclopædia. He will find it also in Dr Young. We prefer the form which we have employed, because it is etymologically correct. Mr Sadler seems not to know that a hecatare is so called, because it contains a hundred *ares*.

We were perfectly acquainted with the extent as well as with the name of a hecatare. Is it at all strange that we should use the words "250, or rather more," in speaking of 258 and a fraction? Do not people constantly employ round numbers with still greater looseness, in translating foreign distances and foreign money? If indeed, as Mr Sadler says, the difference which he chooses to call an error involved the entire argument, or any part of the argument, we should have been guilty of gross unfairness. But it is not so. The difference between 258 and

250, as even Mr Sadler would see if he were not blind with fury, was a difference to his advantage. Our point was this. The fecundity of a dense population in certain departments of France is greater than that of a thinly scattered population in certain counties of England. The more dense, therefore, the population in those departments of France, the stronger was our case. By putting 250, instead of 258, we understated our case. Mr Sadler's correction of our orthography leads us to suspect that he knows very little of Greek; and his correction of our calculation quite satisfies us that he knows very little of logic.

But, to come to the gist of the controversy. Our argument, drawn from Mr Sadler's own tables, remains absolutely untouched. He makes excuses indeed; for an excuse is the last thing that Mr Sadler will ever want. There is something half laughable and half provoking in the facility with which he asserts and retracts, says and unsays, exactly as suits his argument. Sometimes the register of baptisms is imperfect, and sometimes the register of burials. Then again these registers become all at once exact almost to an unit. He brings forward a census of Prussia in proof of his theory. We show that it directly confutes his theory; and it forthwith becomes "notoriously and grossly defective." The census of the Netherlands is not to be easily dealt with; and the census of the Netherlands is therefore pronounced inaccurate. In his book on the Law of Population, he tells us that "in the slave-holding States of America, the male slaves constitute a decided majority of that unfortunate class." This fact we turned against him; and, forgetting that he had himself stated it, he tells us that "it is as erroneous as many other ideas which we entertain," and that "he will venture to assert that the female slaves were, at the nubile age, as numerous as the males." The increase of the negroes in the United States puzzles him; and he creates a vast slave-trade to solve it. He confounds together things perfectly different; the slave-trade carried on under the American flag, and the slave-trade carried on for the supply of the American soil,—the slave-trade with Africa, and the internal slave-trade between the different States. He exaggerates a few occasional acts of smuggling into an immense and regular importation, and makes his escape as well as he can under cover of this hubbub of words. Documents are authentic and facts true precisely in proportion to the support which they afford to his theory. This is one way, undoubtedly, of making books; but we question much whether it be the way to make discoveries.

As to the inconsistencies which we pointed out between his theory and his own tables, he finds no difficulty in explaining them away or facing them out. In one case there would have been no contradiction if, instead of taking one of his tables, we had multiplied the number of three tables together, and taken the average. Another would never have existed if there had not been a great migration of people into Lancashire. Another is not to be got over by any device. But then it is very small, and of no consequence to the argument.

Here, indeed, he is perhaps right. The inconsistencies which we noticed, were, in themselves, of little moment. We give them as samples,—as mere hints, to caution those of our readers who might also happen to be readers of Mr Sadler against being deceived by his packing. He complains of the word packing. We repeat it; and, since he has defied us to the proof, we will go fully into the question which, in our last article, we only glanced at, and prove, in such a manner as shall not leave even to Mr Sadler any shadow of excuse, that his theory owes its speciousness to packing, and to packing alone.

That our readers may fully understand our reasoning, we will again state what Mr Sadler's proposition is. He asserts that, on a given space, the number of children to a marriage becomes less and less as the population becomes more and more numerous.

We will begin with the census of France given by Mr Sadler. By joining the departments together in combinations which suit his purpose, he has contrived to produce three tables, which he presents as decisive proofs of his theory.

The first is as follows :—

"The legitimate births are, in those departments where there are to each inhabitant—

From 4 to 5 hects.	(2 departs.) to every 1000 marriages	130
3 to 4 ...	(3 do.)	4372
2 to 3 ...	(30 do.)	4250
1 to 2 ...	(44 do.)	4234
·06 to 1 ...	(5 do.)	4146
and ·06 ...	(1 do.)	2657

The two other computations he has given in one table. We subjoin it.

Hect. to each Inhabitant.	Number of Departments.	Legit. Births to 100 Marriages.	Legit. Births to 100 Mar. (1826).
4 to 5	2	497	397
3 to 4	3	439	389
2 to 3	30	424	379
1 to 2	44	420	375
under 1	5	415	372
and ·06	1	263	253

These tables, as we said in our former article, certainly look well for Mr Sadler's theory. "Do they?" says he. "Assuredly they do ; and in admitting this, the Reviewer has admitted the theory to be proved." We cannot absolutely agree to this. A theory is not proved, we must tell Mr Sadler, merely because the evidence in its favour looks well at first sight. There is an old proverb, very homely in expression, but well deserving to be had in constant remembrance by all men, engaged either in action or in speculation—"One story is good till another is told!"

We affirm, then, that the results which these tables present, and which seem so favourable to Mr Sadler's theory, are produced by packing, and by packing alone.

In the first place, if we look at the departments singly, the whole is in disorder. About the department in which Paris is situated there is no dispute : Mr Malthus distinctly admits that great cities prevent propagation. There remain eighty-four departments ; and of these there is not, we believe, a single one in the place which, according to Mr Sadler's principle, it ought to occupy.

That which ought to be highest in fecundity is tenth in one table, fourteenth in another, and only thirty-first according to the third. That which ought to be third is twenty-second by the table, which places it highest. That which ought to be fourth is fortieth by the table, which places it highest. That which ought to be eighth is fiftieth or sixtieth. That which ought to be tenth from the top is at about the same distance from the bottom. On the other hand, that which, according to Mr Sadler's principle, ought to be last but two of all the eighty-four is third in two of the tables, and seventh in that which places it lowest; and that which ought to be last is, in one of Mr Sadler's tables, above that which ought to be first, in two of them, above that which ought to be third, and, in all of them, above that which ought to be fourth.

By dividing the departments in a particular manner, Mr Sadler has produced results which he contemplates with great satisfaction. But, if we draw the lines a little higher up or a little lower down, we shall find that all his calculations are thrown into utter confusion; and that the phenomena, if they indicate anything, indicate a law the very reverse of that which he has propounded.

Let us take, for example, the thirty-two departments, as they stand in Mr Sadler's table, from Lozére to Meuse inclusive, and divide them into two sets of sixteen departments each. The set from Lozére and Loiret inclusive consists of those departments in which the space to each inhabitant is from 3·8 hecatares to 2·42. The set from Cantal to Meuse inclusive consists of those departments in which the space to each inhabitant is from 2·42 hecatares to 2·07. That is to say, in the former set the inhabitants are from 68 to 107 on the square mile, or thereabouts. In the latter they are from 107 to 125. Therefore, on Mr Sadler's principle, the fecundity ought to be smaller in the latter set than in the former. It is, however, greater, and that in every one of Mr Sadler's three tables.

Let us now go a little lower down, and take another set of sixteen departments—those which lie together in Mr Sadler's tables, from Hérault to Jura inclusive. Here the population is still thicker than in the second of those sets which we before compared. The fecundity, therefore, ought, on Mr Sadler's principle, to be less than in that set. But it is again greater, and that in all Mr Sadler's three tables. We have a regularly ascending series, where, if his theory had any truth in it, we ought to have a regularly descending series. We will give the results of our calculation.

The number of children to 1000 marriages is—

	First Table.	Second Table.	Third Table.
In the sixteen departments where there are from 68 to 107 people on a square mile	4188	4226	3780
In the sixteen departments where there are from 107 to 125 people on a square mile..................	4374	4332	3855
In the sixteen departments where there are from 134 to 155 people on a square mile..................	4484	4416	3914

We will give another instance, if possible still more decisive. We will take the three departments of France which ought, on Mr Sadler's principle, to be the lowest in fecundity of all the eighty-five, saving only that in which Paris stands ; and we will compare them with the three departments in which the fecundity ought, according to him, to be greater than in any other department of France, two only excepted. We will compare Bas Rhin, Rhone, and Nord, with Lozére, Landes, and Indre. In Lozére, Landes, and Indre, the population is from 68 to 84 on the square mile or nearly so. In Bas Rhin, Rhone, and Nord, it is from 300 to 417 on the square mile. There cannot be a more overwhelming answer to Mr Sadler's theory than the table which we subjoin :

The number of births to 1000 marriages is—

	First Table.	Second Table.	Third Table.
In the three departments in which there are from 68 to 84 people on the square mile................	4372	4390	3890
In the three departments in which there are from 300 to 417 people on the square mile	4457	4510	4060

These are strong cases. But we have a still stronger case. Take the whole of the third, fourth, and fifth divisions into which Mr Sadler has portioned out the French departments. These three divisions make up almost the whole kingdom of France. They contain seventy-nine out of the eighty-five departments. Mr Sadler has contrived to divide them in such a manner that, to a person who looks merely at his averages, the fecundity seems to diminish as the population thickens. We will separate them into two parts instead of three. We will draw the line between the department of Gironde and that of Hérault. On the one side are the thirty-two departments from Cher to Gironde inclusive. On the other side are the forty-six departments from Hérault to Nord inclusive. In all the departments of the former set, the population is under 132 on the square mile. In all the departments of the latter set, it is above 132 on the square mile. It is clear that, if there be one word of truth in Mr Sadler's theory, the fecundity in the latter of these divisions must be very decidedly smaller than in the former. Is it so? It is, on the contrary, greater in all the three tables. We give the result.

The number of births to 1000 marriages is—

	First Table.	Second Table.	Third Table.
In the thirty-two departments in which there are from 86 to 132 people on the square mile	4210	4199	3760
In the forty-seven departments in which there are from 132 to 417 people on the square mile	4250	4224	3766

This fact is alone enough to decide the question. Yet it is only one of a crowd of similar facts. If the line between Mr Sadler's second and third division be drawn six departments lower down, the third and fourth divisions will, in all the tables, be above the second. If the line between the third and fourth divisions be drawn two departments lower down, the fourth division will be above the third in all the tables. If the line between the fourth and fifth division be drawn two departments lower down, the fifth will, in all the tables, be above the fourth, above the third, and even above the second. How, then, has Mr Sadler obtained his results? By packing solely. By placing in one compartment a district no larger than the Isle of Wight; in another, a district somewhat less than Yorkshire; in a third, a territory much larger than the island of Great Britain.

By the same artifice it is that he has obtained from the census of England those delusive averages which he brings forward with the utmost ostentation in proof of his principle. We will examine the facts relating to England, as we have examined those relating to France.

If we look at the counties one by one, Mr Sadler's principle utterly fails. Hertfordshire with 251 on the square mile; Worcester with 258; and Kent with 282, exhibit a far greater fecundity than the East Riding of York, which has 151 on the square mile; Monmouthshire, which has 145; or Northumberland, which has 108. The fecundity of Staffordshire, which has more than 300 on the square mile, is as high as the average fecundity of the counties which have from 150 to 200 on the square mile. But, instead of confining ourselves to particular instances, we will try masses.

Take the eight counties of England which stand together in Mr Sadler's list, from Cumberland to Dorset inclusive. In these the population is from 107 to 150 on the square mile. Compare with these the eight counties from Berks to Durham inclusive, in which the population is from 175 to 200 on the square mile. Is the fecundity in the latter counties smaller than in the former? On the contrary, the result stands thus:

The number of children to 100 marriages is—

In the eight counties of England, in which there are from 107 to 146 people on the square mile	388
In the eight counties of England, in which there are from 175 to 200 people on the square mile	402

Take the six districts from the East Riding of York to the County o Norfolk inclusive. Here the population is from 150 to 170 on the square mile. To these oppose the six counties from Derby to Worcester inclusive. The population is from 200 to 260. Here again we find that a law, directly the reverse of that which Mr Sadler has laid down, appears to regulate the fecundity of the inhabitants.

The number of children to 100 marriages is—

In the six counties in which there are from 150 to 170 people on the square mile	392
In the six counties in which there are from 200 to 260 people on the square mile	399

But we will make another experiment on Mr Sadler's tables, if possible more decisive than any of those which we have hitherto made. We will take the four largest divisions into which he has distributed the English counties, and which follow each other in regular order. That our readers may fully comprehend the nature of that packing by which his theory is supported, we will set before them this part of his table.

COUNTIES.	Population on a Square Mile.	Population in 1821.	Square Miles in each County.	Number of Marriages from 1810 to 1820.	Number of Baptisms from 1810 to 1820.	Proportion of Births to 100 Marriages.
Lincoln	105	288,800	2748	20,892	87,620	
Cumberland ...	107	159,300	1478	10,299	45.085	
Northumberland ...	108	203,000	1871	12,997	45,871	
Hereford	122	105,300	860	6,202	27,909	
Rutland	127	18,900	149	1,286	5,125	
Huntingdon ...	134	49,800	370	3,766	13,633	
Cambridge	145	124,400	858	9,894	37,491	
Monmouth	145	72,300	498	4,586	13.411	
Dorset	146	147,400	1005	9,554	39,060	
From 100 *to* 150.				79,476	315,205	396
York, East Riding	151	194,300	1280	15,313	55,606	
Salop	156	210,300	1341	13,613	58,542	
Sussex	162	237,700	1463	15,779	68,700	
Northampton ...	163	165,800	1017	12,346	42,336	
Wilts	164	226,600	1379	15,654	58,845	
Norfolk	168	351,300	2092	25,752	102,259	
Devon	173	447,900	2579	35,264	130,758	
Southampton ...	177	289,000	1628	24,561	88,170	
Berks	178	134,700	756	9,301	38,841	
Suffolk	182	276,000	1512	19,885	76,327	
Bedford	184	85,400	463	6,536	22,871	
Buckingham ...	185	136.800	740	9,505	37.518	
Oxford	186	139,800	752	9,131	39,633	
Essex	193	295,300	1532	19,726	79,792	
Cornwall	198	262,600	1327	17,363	74,611	
Durham	199	211,900	1061	14,787	58,222	
From 150 *to* 200.				264,516	1,033,039	390
Derby	212	217,600	1026	14,226	58,804	
Somerset	220	362,300	1642	24,356	95,802	
Leicester	221	178,100	804	13,366	47,013	
Nottingham ...	228	190,700	837	14,296	55,517	
From 200 *to* 250.				66,244	257,136	388
Hertford	251	132,400	528	7,386	35,741	
Worcester	258	188,200	729	13,178	53,838	
Chester	262	275,500	1052	20,305	75,012	
Gloucester	272	342,600	1256	28,884	90,671	
Kent	282	434,600	1537	33,502	135,060	
From 250 *to* 300.				103,255	390,322	378

These averages look well, undoubtedly, for Mr Sadler's theory. The numbers 396, 390, 388, 378, follow each other very speciously in a descending order. But let our readers divide these thirty-four counties into two equal sets of seventeen counties each, and try whether the principle will then hold good. We have made this calculation, and we present them with the following result.

The number of children to 100 marriages is—

In the seventeen counties of England in which there are from 100 to 177 people on the square mile, ...	387
In the seventeen counties in which there are from 177 to 282 people on the square mile, ...	389

The difference is small, but not smaller than differences which Mr Sadler has brought forward as proofs of his theory. We say that these English tables no more prove that fecundity increases with the population than that it diminishes with the population. The thirty-four counties which we have taken make up, at least, four-fifths of the kingdom : and we see that, through those thirty-four counties, the phenomena are directly opposed to Mr Sadler's principle. That in the capital, and in great manufacturing towns, marriages are less prolific than in the open country, we admit, and Mr Malthus admits. But that any condensation of the population, short of that which injures all physical energies, will diminish the prolific powers of man, is, from these very tables of Mr Sadler, completely disproved.

It is scarcely worth while to proceed with instances, after proofs so overwhelming as those which we have given. Yet we will show that Mr Sadler has formed his averages on the census of Prussia by an artifice exactly similar to that which we have already exposed.

Demonstrating the Law of Population from the Censuses of Prussia at two several Periods.

Provinces.	Inhabitants on a Square League.	Births to each Marriage, 1756.	Average.	Births to each Marriage, 1784.	Average.
West Prussia..	832		4·34	4·75	4·72
Pomerania	928	4·3		4·69	
East Prussia...	1175	5·07	4·14	5·10	4·45
New Mark	1190	4·22		4·43	
Mark of Brandenburg...	1790	3·88		4·60	
East Friesland	1909	3·39		3·66	
Guelderland	2083	4·33	3·84	3·74	4·24
Silesia and Glatz	2314			4·84	
Cleves	2375	3·80		4·03	
Minden and Ravensburg	2549	3·67		4·31	
Magdeburg	2692	4·03		4·57	
Neufchatel, &c.	2700	3·39		3·98	
Halberstadt	3142	3·71	3·65	4·48	4·08
Ticklingburg and Lingen	3461	3·59		3·69	

Of the census of 1756 we will say nothing, as Mr Sadler, finding himself hard pressed by the argument which we drew from it, now declares it to be grossly defective. We confine ourselves to the census of 1784: and we will draw our lines at points somewhat different from those at which Mr Sadler has drawn his. Let the first compartment remain as it stands. Let East Prussia, which contains a much larger population than his last compartment, stand alone in the second division. Let the third consist of the New Mark, the Mark of Brandenburg, East Friesland and Guelderland, and the fourth of the remaining provinces. Our readers will find that, on this arrangement, the division which, on Mr Sadler's principle, ought to be second in fecundity stands higher than that which ought to be first; and that the division which ought to be fourth stands higher than that which ought to be third. We will give the result in one view.

The number of births to a marriage is—

In those provinces of Prussia where there are fewer than 1000 people on the square league	4·72
In the province in which there are 1175 people on the square league	5·10
In the provinces in which there are from 1190 to 2083 people on the square league	4·10
In the provinces in which there are from 2314 to 3461 people on the square league	4·27

We will go no farther with this examination. In fact, we have nothing more to examine. The tables which we have scrutinised constitute the whole strength of Mr Sadler's case; and we confidently leave it to our readers to say, whether we have not shown that the strength of his case is weakness.

Be it remembered too that we are reasoning on data furnished by Mr Sadler himself. We have not made collections of facts to set against his, as we easily might have done. It is on his own showing, it is out of his own mouth, that his theory stands condemned.

That packing which we have exposed is not the only sort of packing which Mr Sadler has practised. We mentioned in our review some facts relating to the towns of England, which appear from Mr Sadler's tables, and which it seems impossible to explain if his principles be sound. The average fecundity of a marriage in towns of fewer than 3000 inhabitants is greater than the average fecundity of the kingdom. The average fecundity in towns of from 4000 to 5000 inhabitants is greater than the average fecundity of Warwickshire, Lancashire, or Surrey. How is it, we asked, if Mr Sadler's principle be correct, that the fecundity of Guildford should be greater than the average fecundity of the county in which it stands?

Mr Sadler, in reply, talks about "the absurdity of comparing the fecundity in the small towns alluded to with that in the counties of Warwick and Stafford, or in those of Lancaster and Surrey." He proceeds thus—

"In Warwickshire, far above half the population is comprised in large towns, including, of course, the immense metropolis of one great branch of our manufactures, Birmingham. In the county of Stafford, besides the large and populous towns in its iron districts, situated so close together as almost to form, for considerable distances, a continuous street; there is, in its potteries, a great population, recently accumulated, not included, indeed, in the towns distinctly enumerated in the censuses, but vastly exceeding in its condensation that found in the places to which the Reviewer alludes. In Lancashire, again, to which he also appeals, one-fourth of the entire population is made up of the inhabitants of two only of the towns of that county; far above half of it is contained in towns, compared with which those he refers to are villages: even the hamlets of the manufacturing parts of Lancashire are often far more populous than the places he mentions. But he presents us with a climax of absurdity in appealing lastly to the population of Surrey as quite rural compared with that of the twelve towns having less than 5000 inhabitants in their respective jurisdictions, such as Saffron-Walden, Monmouth, &c. Now, in the last census, Surrey numbered 398,658 inhabitants, and to say not a word about the other towns of the county, much above two hundred thousands of these are *within the Bills of Mortality!* 'We should, therefore, be glad to know' how it is utterly inconsistent with my principle that the fecundity of Guildford, which numbers about 3000 inhabitants, should be greater than the average fecundity of Surrey, made up, as the bulk of the population of Surrey is, of the inhabitants of some of the worst parts of the metropolis? Or why the fecundity of a given number of marriages in the eleven little rural towns he alludes to, being somewhat higher than that of an equal number, half taken, for instance, from the heart of Birmingham or Manchester, and half from the populous districts by which they are surrounded, is inconsistent with my theory?

"Had the Reviewer's object, in this instance, been to discover the truth, or had he known how to pursue it, it is perfectly clear, at first sight, that he would not have instituted a comparison between the prolificness which exists in the small towns he has alluded to, and that in certain districts, the population of which is made up, partly of rural inhabitants and partly of accumulations of people in immense masses, the prolificness of which, if he will allow me still the use of the phrase, is inversely as their magnitude; but he would have compared these small towns with the country places properly so called, and then again the different classes of towns with each other; this method would have led him to certain conclusions on the subject."

Now, this reply shows that Mr Sadler does not in the least understand the principle which he has himself laid down. What is that principle? It is this, that the fecundity of human beings *on given spaces*, varies inversely as their numbers. We know what he means by inverse variation. But we must suppose that he uses the words, "given spaces," in the proper sense. Given spaces are equal spaces. Is there any reason to believe, that in those parts of Surrey which lie within the bills of mortality, there is any space equal in area to the space on which Guildford stands, which is more thickly peopled than the space on which Guildford stands? We do not know that there is any such. We are sure that there are not many. Why, therefore, on Mr Sadler's principle, should the people of Guildford be more prolific than the people who live within the bills of mortality? And, if the people of Guildford ought, as on Mr Sadler's principle they unquestionably ought, to stand as low in the scale of fecundity as the people of Southwark itself, it follows, most clearly, that they ought to stand far lower than the average obtained by taking all the people of Surrey together.

The same remark applies to the case of Birmingham, and to all the other cases which Mr Sadler mentions. Towns of 5000 inhabitants may be, and often are, as thickly peopled "on a given space," as Birmingham. They are, in other words, as thickly peopled as a portion of Birmingham, equal to them in area. If so, on Mr Sadler's principle, they ought to be as low in the scale of fecundity as Birmingham. But they are not so. On the contrary, they stand higher than the average obtained by taking the fecundity of Birmingham in combination with the fecundity of the rural districts of Warwickshire.

The plain fact is, that Mr Sadler has confounded the population of a city with its population "on a given space,"—a mistake which, in a gentleman who assures us that mathematical science was one of his early and favourite studies, is somewhat curious. It is as absurd, on his principle, to say that the fecundity of London ought to be less than the fecundity of Edinburgh, because London has a greater population than Edinburgh, as to say that the fecundity of Russia ought to be greater than that of England, because Russia has a greater population than England. He cannot say that the spaces on which towns stand are too small to exemplify the truth of his principle. For he has himself brought forward the scale of fecundity in towns, as a proof of his principle. And, in the very passage which we quoted above, he tells us that, if we knew how to pursue truth or wished to find it, we "should have compared these small towns with country places, and the different classes of towns with each other." That is to say, we ought to compare together such unequal spaces as give results favourable to his theory, and never to compare such equal spaces as give results opposed to it. Does he mean anything by "a given space?" Or does he mean merely such a space as suits his argument? It is perfectly clear that, if he is allowed to take this course, he may prove anything. No fact can come amiss to him. Suppose, for example, that the fecundity of New York should prove to be smaller than the fecundity of Liverpool. "That," says Mr Sadler, "makes for my theory. For there are more people within two miles of the Broadway of New York, than within two miles of the Exchange of Liverpool." Suppose, on the other hand, that the fecundity of New York should be greater than the fecundity of Liverpool. "This," says Mr Sadler again, "is an unanswerable proof of my theory. For there are many more people within forty miles of Liverpool than within forty miles of New York." In order to obtain his numbers, he takes spaces in any combinations which may suit him. In order to obtain his averages, he takes numbers in any combinations which may suit him. And then he tells us that, because his tables, at the first glance, look well for his theory, his theory is irrefragably proved.

We will add a few words respecting the argument which we drew from the peerage. Mr Sadler asserted that the peers were a class condemned by nature to sterility. We denied this, and showed from the last edition of Debrett, that the peers of the United Kingdom have considerably more than the average number of children to a marriage. Mr Sadler's answer has amused us much. He denies the accuracy of our counting, and, by reckoning all the Scotch and Irish peers as peers of the United Kingdom, certainly makes very different numbers from those which we gave. A member of the Parliament of the United Kingdom might have been expected, we think, to know better what a peer of the United Kingdom is.

By taking the Scotch and Irish peers, Mr Sadler has altered the average. But it is considerably higher than the average fecundity of England, and still, therefore, constitutes an unanswerable argument against his theory.

The shifts to which, in this difficulty, he has recourse, are exceedingly diverting. "The average fecundity of the marriages of peers," said we, "is higher by one-fifth than the average fecundity of marriages throughout the kingdom."

"Where, or by whom did the Reviewer find it supposed," answers Mr Sadler, "that the registered baptisms expressed the full fecundity of the marriages of England?"

Assuredly, if the registers of England are so defective as to explain the difference which, on our calculation, exists between the fecundity of the peers and the fecundity of the people, no argument against Mr Sadler's theory can be drawn from that difference. But what becomes of all the other arguments which Mr Sadler has founded on these very registers? Above all, what becomes of his comparison between the censuses of England and France? In the pamphlet before us, he dwells with great complacency on a coincidence which seems to him to support his theory, and which to us seems, of itself, sufficient to overthrow it.

> "In my table of the population of France in the forty-four departments in which there are from one to two hectares to each inhabitant, the fecundity of 100 marriages, calculated on the average of the results of the three computations relating to different periods given in my table, is $406\frac{7}{10}$. In the twenty-two counties of England in which there is from one to two hectares to each inhabitant, or from 129 to 259 on the square mile,—beginning, therefore, with Huntingdonshire, and ending with Worcestershire,—the whole number of marriages during ten years will be found to amount to 379,624, and the whole number of the births during the same term to 1,545,549—or $407\frac{1}{10}$ births to 100 marriages! A difference of one in one thousand only, compared with the French proportion!"

Does not Mr Sadler see that, if the registers of England, which are notoriously very defective, give a result exactly corresponding almost to an unit with that obtained from the registers of France, which are notoriously very full and accurate, this proves the very reverse of what he employs it to prove? The correspondence of the registers proves that there is no correspondence in the facts. In order to raise the average fecundity of England even to the level of the average fecundity of the peers of the three kingdoms, which is 3·81 to a marriage, it is necessary to add nearly six per cent. to the number of births given in the English registers. But, if this addition be made, we shall have, in the counties of England, from Huntingdonshire to Worcestershire inclusive, 4·30 births to a marriage or thereabouts: and the boasted coincidence between the phenomena of propagation in France and England disappears at once. This is a curious specimen of Mr Sadler's proficiency in the art of making excuses. In the same pamphlet he reasons as if the same registers were accurate to one in a thousand, and as if they were wrong at the very least by one in eighteen.

He tries to show that we have not taken a fair criterion of the fecundity of the peers. We are not quite sure that we understand his reasoning on this subject. The order of his observations is more than usually confused, and the cloud of words more than usually thick. We will give the argument on which he seems to lay most stress in his own words:—

> "But I shall first notice a far more obvious and important blunder

into which the Reviewer has fallen; or into which, I rather fear, he knowingly wishes to precipitate his readers, since I have distinctly pointed out what ought to have preserved him from it in the very chapter he is criticising and contradicting. It is this:—he has entirely omitted 'counting' the sterile marriages of all those peerages which have become extinct during the very period his counting embraces. He counts, for instance, Earl Fitzwilliam, his marriages, and heir; but has he not omitted to enumerate the marriages of those branches of the same noble house, which have become extinct since that venerable individual possessed his title? He talks of my having appealed merely to the extinction of peerages in my argument; but, on his plan of computation, extinctions are perpetually and wholly lost sight of. In computing the average prolificness of the marriages of the nobles, he positively counts from a select class of them only, one from which the unprolific are constantly weeded, and regularly disappear; and he thus comes to the conclusion, that the peers are 'an eminently prolific class!' Just as though a farmer should compute the rate of increase; not from the quantity of seed sown, but from that part of it only which comes to perfection, entirely omitting all which had failed to spring up or come to maturity. Upon this principle the most scanty crop ever obtained, in which the husbandman should fail to receive 'seed again,' as the phrase is, might be so 'counted' as to appear 'eminently prolific' indeed."

If we understand this passage rightly, it decisively proves that Mr Sadler is incompetent to perform even the lowest offices of statistical research. What shadow of reason is there to believe that the peers who were alive in the year 1828 differed as to their prolificness from any other equally numerous set of peers taken at random? In what sense were the peers who were alive in 1828 analogous to that part of the seed which comes to perfection? Did we entirely omit all that failed? On the contrary, we counted the sterile as well as the fruitful marriages of all the peers of the United Kingdom living at one time. In what way were the peers who were alive in 1828 a select class? In what way were the sterile weeded from among them? Did every peer who had been married without having issue die in 1827? What shadow of reason is there to suppose that there was not the ordinary proportion of barren marriages among the marriages contracted by the noblemen whose names are in Debrett's last edition? But we ought, says Mr Sadler, to have counted all the sterile marriages of all the peers "whose titles had become extinct during the period which our counting embraced;" that is to say, since the earliest marriage contracted by any peer living in 1828. Was such a proposition ever heard of before? Surely we were bound to do no such thing, unless at the same time we had counted also the children born from all the fruitful marriages contracted by peers during the same period. Mr Sadler would have us divide the number of children born to peers living in 1828, not by the number of marriages which those peers contracted, but by the number of marriages which those peers contracted added to a crowd of marriages selected, on account of their sterility, from among the noble marriages which have taken place during the last fifty years. Is this the way to obtain fair averages? We might as well require that all the noble marriages which during the last fifty years have produced ten children apiece should be added to those of the peers living in 1828. The proper way to ascertain whether a set of people be prolific or sterile is, not to take marriages selected from the mass either on account of their fruitfulness or on account of their sterility, but to take a collection of marriages which there is no reason to think either more or less fruitful than others. What reason is there to think that the marriages contracted by the peers who were alive in 1828 were more fruitful than those contracted by the peers who were alive in 1800 or in 1750?

We will add another passage from Mr Sadler's pamphlet on this subject. We attributed the extinction of peerages partly to the fact that those honours are for the most part limited to heirs male.

> "This is a discovery indeed! Peeresses 'eminently prolific,' do not, as Macbeth conjured his spouse, 'bring forth men-children only;' they actually produce daughters as well as sons!! Why, does not the Reviewer see, that so long as the rule of nature, which proportions the sexes so accurately to each other, continues to exist, a tendency to a diminution in one sex proves, as certainly as the demonstration of any mathematical problem, a tendency to a diminution in both; but to talk of 'eminently prolific' peeresses, and still maintain that the rapid extinction in peerages is owing to their not bearing male children exclusively, is arrant nonsense."

Now, if there be any proposition on the face of the earth which we should not have expected to hear characterised as arrant nonsense, it is this,—that an honour limited to males alone is more likely to become extinct than an honour which, like the crown of England, descends indifferently to sons and daughters. We have heard, nay, we actually know families, in which, much as Mr Sadler may marvel at it, there are daughters and no sons. Nay, we know many such families. We are as much inclined as Mr Sadler to trace the benevolent and wise arrangements of Providence in the physical world, when once we are satisfied as to the facts on which we proceed. And we have always considered it as an arrangement deserving of the highest admiration, that, though in families the number of males and females differs widely, yet in great collections of human beings the disparity almost disappears. The chance undoubtedly is, that in a thousand marriages the number of daughters will not very much exceed the number of sons. But the chance also is, that several of those marriages will produce daughters, and daughters only. In every generation of the peerage there are several such cases. When a peer whose title is limited to male heirs dies, leaving only daughters, his peerage must expire, unless he have, not only a collateral heir, but a collateral heir descended through an uninterrupted line of males from the first possessor of the honour. If the deceased peer was the first nobleman of his family, then, by the supposition, his peerage will become extinct. If he was the second, it will become extinct, unless he leaves a brother or a brother's son. If the second peer had a brother, the first peer must have had at least two sons; and this is more than the average number of sons to a marriage in England. When, therefore, it is considered how many peerages are in the first and second generation, it will not appear strange that extinctions should frequently take place. There are peerages which descend to females as well as males. But, in such cases, if a peer dies, leaving only daughters, the very fecundity of the marriage is a cause of the extinction of the peerage. If there were only one daughter, the honour would descend. If there are several, it falls into abeyance.

But it is needless to multiply words in a case so clear; and indeed it is needless to say anything more about Mr Sadler's book. We have, if we do not deceive ourselves, completely exposed the calculations on which his theory rests; and we do not think that we should either amuse our readers or serve the cause of science if we were to rebut in succession a series of futile charges brought in the most angry spirit against ourselves; ignorant imputations of ignorance, and unfair complaints of unfairness,—conveyed in long, dreary, declamations, so prolix that we cannot find space to quote them, and so confused that we cannot venture to abridge them.

There is much indeed in this foolish pamphlet to laugh at, from the motto in the first page down to some wisdom about cows in the last. One part of it indeed is solemn enough, we mean a certain *jeu d'esprit* of Mr Sadler's touching a tract of Dr Arbuthnot's. This is indeed "very tragical mirth," as Peter Quince's playbill has it; and we would not advise any person who reads for amusement to venture on it as long as he can procure a volume of the Statutes at Large. This, however, to do Mr Sadler justice, is an exception. His witticisms, and his tables of figures, constitute the only parts of his work which can be perused with perfect gravity. His blunders are diverting, his excuses exquisitely comic. But his anger is the most grotesque exhibition that we ever saw. He foams at the mouth with the love of truth, and vindicates the Divine benevolence with a most edifying heartiness of hatred. On this subject we will give him one word of parting advice. If he raves in this way to ease his mind, or because he thinks that he does himself credit by it, or from a sense of religious duty, far be it from us to interfere. His peace, his reputation, and his religion are his own concern; and he, like the nobleman to whom his treatise is dedicated, has a right to do what he will with his own. But, if he has adopted his abusive style from a notion that it would hurt our feelings, we must inform him that he is altogether mistaken; and that he would do well in future to give us his arguments, if he has any, and to keep his anger for those who fear it.

MIRABEAU.

(JULY 1832.)

Souvenirs sur Mirabeau, et sur les deux Premières Assemblées Législatives. Par ETIENNE DUMONT, de Genève : ouvrage posthume publié par M. J. L. Duval, Membre du Conseil Représentatif du Canton du Genève. 8vo. Paris : 1832.

THIS is a very amusing and a very instructive book : but even if it were less amusing and less instructive, it would still be interesting as a relic of a wise and virtuous man. M. Dumont was one of those persons, the care of whose fame belongs in an especial manner to mankind. For he was one of those persons who have, for the sake of mankind, neglected the care of their own fame. In his walk through life there was no obtrusiveness, no pushing, no elbowing, none of the little arts which bring forward little men. With every right to the head of the board, he took the lowest room, and well deserved to be greeted with—Friend, go up higher. Though no man was more capable of achieving for himself a separate and independent renown, he attached himself to others ; he laboured to raise their fame ; he was content to receive as his share of the reward the mere overflowings which redounded from the full measure of their glory. Not that he was of a servile and idolatrous habit of mind :—not that he was one of the tribe of Boswells,—those literary Gibeonites, born to be hewers of wood and drawers of water to the higher intellectual castes. Possessed of talents and acquirements which made him great, he wished only to be useful. In the prime of manhood, at the very time of life at which ambitious men are most ambitious, he was not solicitous to proclaim that he furnished information, arguments, and eloquence to Mirabeau. In his later years he was perfectly willing that his renown should merge in that of Mr Bentham.

The services which M. Dumont has rendered to society can be fully appreciated only by those who have studied Mr Bentham's works, both in their rude and in their finished state. The difference both for show and for use is as great as the difference between a lump of golden ore and a rouleau of sovereigns fresh from the mint. Of Mr Bentham we would at all times speak with the reverence which is due to a great original thinker, and to a sincere and ardent friend of the human race. If a few weaknesses were mingled with his eminent virtues,—if a few errors insinuated themselves among the many valuable truths which he taught,—this is assuredly no time for noticing those weaknesses or those errors in an unkind or sarcastic spirit. A great man has gone from among us, full of years, of good works, and of deserved honours. In some of the highest departments in which the human intellect can exert itself he has not left his equal or his second behind him. From his contemporaries he has had, according to the usual lot, more or less than justice. He has had blind flatterers and blind detractors—flatterers who could see nothing but perfection in his style, detractors who could see nothing but nonsense in his matter. He will now have judges. Posterity will pronounce its calm and impartial decision ; and that decision will, we firmly believe, place in the same rank with Galileo, and with Locke, the man who found jurisprudence a gibberish and left it a science. Never was there a literary partnership so fortunate as that of Mr Bentham and M. Dumont. The raw material which Mr Bentham furnished was most precious ; but it was unmarketable. He was, assuredly, at once a great logician and a great rhetorician. But the effect of his logic was injured by a vicious arrangement, and the effect of his rhetoric by a vicious style. His mind was vigorous, comprehensive, subtile, fertile of arguments, fertile of illustrations. But he spoke in an unknown tongue ; and, that the congregation might be edified, it was necessary that some brother having the gift of interpretation should expound the invaluable jargon. His oracles were of high import ; but they were traced on leaves and flung loose to the wind. So negligent was he of the arts of selection, distribution, and compression, that to persons who formed their judgment of him from his works in their undigested state he seemed to be the least systematic of all philosophers. The truth is, that his opinions formed a system, which, whether sound or unsound, is more exact, more entire, and more consistent with itself than any other. Yet to superficial readers of his works in their original form, and indeed to all readers of those works who did not bring great industry and great acuteness to the study, he seemed to be a man of a quick and ingenious but ill-regulated mind,—who saw truth only by glimpses,—who threw out many striking hints, but who had never thought of combining his doctrines in one harmonious whole.

M. Dumont was admirably qualified to supply what was wanting in Mr Bentham. In the qualities in which the French writers surpass those of all other nations—neatness, clearness, precision, condensation—he surpassed all French writers. If M. Dumont had never been born, Mr Bentham would still have been a very great man. But he would have been great to himself alone. The fertility of his mind would have resembled the fertility of those vast American wildernesses in which blossoms and decays a rich but unprofitable vegetation, "wherewith the reaper filleth not his hand, neither he that bindeth up the sheaves his bosom." It would have been with his discoveries as it has been with the "Century of Inventions." His speculations on laws would have been of no more practical use than Lord Worcester's speculations on steam-engines. Some generations hence, perhaps, when legislation had found its Watt, an antiquarian might have published to the world the curious fact that, in the reign of George the Third, there had been a man called Bentham, who had given hints of many discoveries made since his time, and who had really, for his age, taken a most philosophical view of the principles of jurisprudence.

Many persons have attempted to interpret between this powerful mind and the public. But, in our opinion, M. Dumont alone has succeeded. It is remarkable that, in foreign countries, where Mr Bentham's works are known solely through the medium of the French version, his merit is almost universally acknowledged. Even those who are most decidedly opposed to his political opinions—the very chiefs of the Holy Alliance—have publicly testified their respect for him. In England, on the contrary, many persons who certainly entertained no prejudice against him on political grounds were long in the habit of mentioning him contemptuously. Indeed, what was said of Bacon's philosophy may be said of Bentham's. It was in little repute among us, till judgments in its favour came from beyond sea, and convinced us, to our shame, that we had been abusing and laughing at one of the greatest men of the age.

M. Dumont might easily have found employments more gratifying to personal vanity than that of arranging works not his own. But he could have found no employment more useful or more truly honourable. The book before us, hastily written as it is, contains abundant proof, if proof were needed, that he did not become an editor because he wanted the talents which would have made him eminent as a writer.

Persons who hold democratical opinions, and who have been accustomed to consider M. Dumont as one of their party, have been surprised and mortified to learn that he speaks with very little respect of the French Revolution and of its authors. Some zealous Tories have naturally expressed great satisfaction at finding their doctrines, in some respects, confirmed by the testimony of an unwilling witness. The date of the work, we think, explains everything. If it had been written ten years earlier, or twenty years later, it would have been very different from what it is. It was written, neither during the first excitement of the Revolution, nor at that later period when the practical good produced by the Revolution had become manifest to the most prejudiced observers; but in those wretched times when the enthusiasm had abated, and the solid advantages were not yet fully seen. It was written in the year 1799,—a year in which the most sanguine friend of liberty might well feel some misgivings as to the effects of what the National Assembly had done. The evils which attend every great change had been severely felt. The benefit was still to come. The price—a heavy price—had been paid. The thing purchased had not yet been delivered. Europe was swarming with French exiles. The fleets and armies of the second coalition were victorious. Within France, the reign of terror was over; but the reign of law had not commenced. There had been, indeed, during three or four years, a written Constitution, by which rights were defined and checks provided. But these rights had been repeatedly violated; and those checks had proved utterly inefficient. The laws which had been framed to secure the distinct authority of the executive magistrates and of the legislative assemblies—the freedom of election—the freedom of debate—the freedom of the press—the personal freedom of citizens—were a dead letter. The ordinary mode in which the Republic was governed was by *coups d'état*. On one occasion, the legislative councils were placed under military restraint by the directors. Then, again, directors were deposed by the legislative councils. Elections were set aside by the executive authority. Ship-loads of writers and speakers were sent, without a legal trial, to die of fever in Guiana. France, in short, was in that state in which revolutions, effected by violence, almost always leave a nation. The habit of obedience had been lost. The spell of prescription had been broken. Those associations on which, far more than on any arguments about property and order, the authority of magistrates rests, had completely passed away. The power of the government consisted merely in the physical force which it could bring to its support. Moral force it had none. It was itself a government sprung from a recent convulsion. Its own fundamental maxim was, that rebellion might be justifiable. Its own existence proved that rebellion might be successful. The people had been accustomed, during several years, to offer resistance to the constituted authorities on the slightest provocation, and to see the constituted authorities yield to that resistance. The whole political world was "without form and void"—an incessant whirl of hostile atoms, which, every moment, formed some new combination. The only man who could fix the agitated elements of society in a stable form was following a wild vision of glory and empire through the Syrian deserts. The time was not yet come, when

> "Confusion heard his voice; and wild uproar
> Stood ruled:"

when, out of the chaos into which the old society had been resolved, were to rise a new dynasty, a new peerage, a new church, and a new code.

The dying words of Madame Roland, "Oh Liberty! how many crimes are committed in thy name!" were at that time echoed by many of the most upright and benevolent of mankind. M. Guizot has, in one of his admirable pamphlets, happily and justly described M. Lainé as "an honest and liberal man, discouraged by the Revolution." This description, at the time when M. Dumont's Memoirs were written, would have applied to almost every honest and liberal man in Europe; and would, beyond all doubt, have applied to M. Dumont himself. To that fanatical worship of the all-wise and all-good people, which had been common a few years before, had succeeded an uneasy suspicion that the follies and vices of the people would frustrate all attempts to serve them. The wild and joyous exultation, with which the meeting of the States-General and the fall of the Bastile had been hailed, had passed away. In its place was dejection, and a gloomy distrust of suspicious appearances. The philosophers and philanthropists had reigned. And what had their reign produced? Philosophy had brought with it mummeries as absurd as any which had been practised by the most superstitious zealot of the darkest age. Philanthropy had brought with it crimes as horrible as the massacre of Saint Bartholomew. This was the emancipation of the human mind. These were the fruits of the great victory of reason over prejudice. France had rejected the faith of Pascal and Descartes as a nursery fable, that a courtezan might be her idol, and a madman her priest. She had asserted her freedom against Louis, that she might bow down before Robespierre. For a time men thought that all the boasted wisdom of the eighteenth century was folly; and that those hopes of great political and social ameliorations which had been cherished by Voltaire and Condorcet were utterly delusive.

Under the influence of these feelings, M. Dumont has gone so far as to say that the writings of Mr Burke on the French Revolution, though disfigured by exaggeration, and though containing doctrines subversive of all public liberty, had been, on the whole, justified by events, and had probably saved Europe from great disasters. That such a man as the friend and fellow-labourer of Mr Bentham should have expressed such an opinion is a circumstance which well deserves the consideration of uncharitable politicians. These Memoirs have not convinced us that the French Revolution was not a great blessing to mankind. But they have convinced us that very great indulgence is due to those who, while the Revolution was actually taking place, regarded it with unmixed aversion and horror. We can perceive where their error lay. We can perceive that the evil was temporary, and the good durable. But we cannot be sure that, if our lot had been cast in their times, we should not, like them, have been discouraged and disgusted—that we should not, like them, have seen, in that great victory of the French people, only insanity and crime.

It is curious to observe how some men are applauded, and others reviled, for merely being what all their neighbours are,—for merely going passively down the stream of events,—for merely representing the opinions and passions of a whole generation. The friends of popular government ordinarily speak with extreme severity of Mr Pitt, and with respect and tenderness of Mr Canning. Yet the whole difference, we suspect, consisted merely in this,—that Mr Pitt died in 1806, and Mr Canning in 1827. During the years which were common to the public life of both, Mr Canning was assuredly not a more liberal statesman than his patron. The truth is that Mr Pitt began his political life at the end of the American War, when the nation was suffering from the effects of corruption. He closed it in the midst of the calamities produced by the French Revolution, when the nation was still strongly impressed with the horrors of anarchy. He changed, undoubtedly. In his youth he had brought in reform bills. In his manhood he brought in gagging bills. But the change, though lamentable, was, in our opinion, perfectly natural, and might have been perfectly honest. He changed with the great body of his countrymen. Mr Canning, on the other hand, entered into public life when Europe was in dread of the Jacobins. He closed his public life when Europe was suffering under the tyranny of the Holy Alliance. He, too, changed with the nation. As the crimes of the Jacobins had turned the master into something very like a Tory, the events which followed the Congress of Vienna turned the pupil into something very like a Whig.

So much are men the creatures of circumstances. We see that, if M. Dumont had died in 1799, he would have died, to use the new cant word, a decided "Conservative." If Mr Pitt had lived in 1832, it is our firm belief that he would have been a decided Reformer.

The judgment passed by M. Dumont in this work on the French Revolution must be taken with considerable allowances. It resembles a criticism on a play of which only the first act has been performed, or on a building from which the scaffolding has not yet been taken down. We have no doubt that, if the excellent author had revised these Memoirs thirty years after the time at which they were written, he would have seen reason to omit a few passages, and to add many qualifications and explanations.

He would not probably have been inclined to retract the censures, just, though severe, which he has passed on the ignorance, the presumption, and the pedantry, of the National Assembly. But he would have admitted that, in spite of those faults, perhaps even by reason of those faults, that Assembly had conferred inestimable benefits on mankind. It is clear that, among the French of that day, political knowledge was absolutely in its infancy. It would indeed have been strange if it had attained maturity in the time of censors, of *lettres-de-cachet*, and of beds of justice. The electors did not know how to elect. The representatives did not know how to deliberate. M. Dumont taught the constituent body of Montreuil how to perform their functions, and found them apt to learn. He afterwards tried, in concert with Mirabeau, to instruct the National Assembly in that admirable system of Parliamentary tactics which has been long established in the English House of Commons, and which has made the House of Commons, in spite of all the defects in its composition, the best and fairest debating society in the world. But these accomplished legislators, though quite as ignorant as the mob of Montreuil, proved much less docile, and cried out that they did not want to go to school to the English. Their debates consisted of endless successions of trashy pamphlets, all beginning with something about the original compact of society, man in the hunting state, and other such foolery. They sometimes diversified and enlivened these long readings by a little rioting. They bawled ; they hooted ; they shook their fists. They kept no order among themselves. They were insulted with impunity by the crowd which filled their galleries. They gave long and solemn consideration to trifles. They hurried through the most important resolutions with fearful expedition. They wasted months in quibbling about the words of that false and childish Declaration of Rights on which they professed to found their new constitution, and which was at irreconcilable variance with every clause of that constitution. They annihilated in a single night privileges, many of which partook of the nature of property, and ought therefore to have been most delicately handled.

They are called the Constituent Assembly. Never was a name less appropriate. They were not constituent, but the very reverse of constituent. They constituted nothing that stood or that deserved to last. They had not, and they could not possibly have, the information or the habits of mind which are necessary for the framing of that most exquisite of all machines—a government. The metaphysical cant with which they prefaced their constitution has long been the scoff of all parties. Their constitution itself,—that constitution which they described as absolutely perfect, and to which they predicted immortality,—disappeared in a few months, and left no trace behind it. They were great only in the work of destruction.

The glory of the National Assembly is this, that they were in truth, what Mr Burke called them in austere irony, the ablest architects of ruin that ever the world saw. They were utterly incompetent to perform any work which required a discriminating eye and a skilful hand. But the work which was then to be done was a work of devastation. They had to deal with abuses so horrible and so deeply rooted that the highest political wisdom could scarcely have produced greater good to mankind than was produced by their fierce and senseless temerity. Demolition is undoubtedly a vulgar task ; the highest glory of the statesman is to construct. But there is a time for everything,—a time to set up, and a time to pull down. The talents of revolutionary leaders and those of the legislator have equally their use and their season. It is the natural, the almost universal, law, that the age of insurrections and proscriptions shall precede the age of good government, of temperate liberty, and liberal order.

And how should it be otherwise ? It is not in swaddling-bands that we learn to walk. It is not in the dark that we learn to distinguish colours. It is not under oppression that we learn how to use freedom. The ordinary sophism by which misrule is defended is, when truly stated, this :—The people must continue in slavery, because slavery has generated in them all the vices of slaves. Because they are ignorant, they must remain under a power which has made and which keeps them ignorant. Because they have been made ferocious by misgovernment, they must be misgoverned for ever. If the system under which they live were so mild and liberal that under its operation they had become humane and enlightened, it would be safe to venture on a change. But, as this system has destroyed morality, and prevented the development of the intellect,—as it has turned men, who might under different training have formed a virtuous and happy community, into savage and stupid wild beasts,—therefore it ought to last for ever. The English Revolution, it is said, was truly a glorious Revolution. Practical evils were redressed; no excesses were committed; no sweeping confiscations took place; the authority of the laws was scarcely for a moment suspended; the fullest and freest discussion was tolerated in Parliament; the nation showed, by the calm and temperate manner in which it asserted its liberty, that it was fit to enjoy liberty. The French Revolution was, on the other hand, the most horrible event recorded in history,—all madness and wickedness,—absurdity in theory, and atrocity in practice. What folly and injustice in the revolutionary laws! What grotesque affectation in the revolutionary ceremonies! What fanaticism! What licentiousness! What cruelty! Anacharsis Clootz and Marat,—feasts of the Supreme Being, and marriages of the Loire—trees of liberty, and heads dancing on pikes—the whole forms a kind of infernal farce, made up of everything ridiculous, and everything frightful. This it is to give freedom to those who have neither wisdom nor virtue.

It is not only by bad men interested in the defence of abuses that arguments like these have been urged against all schemes of political improvement. Some of the highest and purest of human beings conceived such scorn and aversion for the follies and crimes of the French Revolution that they recanted, in the moment of triumph, those liberal opinions to which they had clung in defiance of persecution. And, if we inquire why it was that they began to doubt whether liberty were a blessing, we shall find that it was only because events had proved, in the clearest manner, that liberty is the parent of virtue and of order. They ceased to abhor tyranny merely because it had been signally shown that the effect of tyranny on the hearts and understandings of men is more demoralising and more stupifying than had ever been imagined by the most zealous friend of popular rights. The truth is, that a stronger argument against the old monarchy of France may be drawn from the *noyades* and the *fusillades* than from the Bastile and the *Parc-aux-cerfs*. We believe it to be a rule without an exception, that the violence of a revolution corresponds to the degree of misgovernment which has produced that revolution. Why was the French Revolution so bloody and destructive? Why was our revolution of 1641 comparatively mild? Why was our revolution of 1688 milder still? Why was the American Revolution, considered as an internal movement, the mildest of all? There is an obvious and complete solution of the problem. The English under James the First and Charles the First were less oppressed than the French under Louis the Fifteenth and Louis the Sixteenth. The English were less oppressed after the Restoration than before the great Rebellion. And America under George the Third was less oppressed than England under the Stuarts. The reaction was exactly proportioned to the pressure,—the vengeance to the provocation.

When Mr Burke was reminded in his later years of the zeal which he had displayed in the cause of the Americans, he vindicated himself from the charge of inconsistency, by contrasting the wisdom and moderation of the Colonial insurgents of 1776 with the fanaticism and wickedness of the Jacobins of 1792. He was in fact bringing an argument *a fortiori* against himself. The circumstances on which he rested his vindication fully proved that the old government of France stood in far more need of a complete change than the old government of America. The difference between Washington and Robespierre,—the difference between Franklin and Barère,—the difference between the destruction of a few barrels of tea and the confiscation of thousands of square miles,—the difference between the tarring and feathering of a tax-gatherer and the massacres of September,—measure the difference between the government of America under the rule of England and the government of France under the rule of the Bourbons.

Louis the Sixteenth made great voluntary concessions to his people; and they sent him to the scaffold. Charles the Tenth violated the fundamental laws of the state, established a despotism, and butchered his subjects for not submitting quietly to that despotism. He failed in his wicked attempt. He was at the mercy of those whom he had injured. The pavements of Paris were still heaped up in barricades;—the hospitals were still full of the wounded;—the dead were still unburied;—a thousand families were in mourning;—a hundred thousand citizens were in arms. The crime was recent;—the life of the criminal was in the hands of the sufferers;—and they touched not one hair of his head. In the first revolution, victims were sent to death by scores for the most trifling acts proved by the lowest testimony, before the most partial tribunals. After the second revolution, those ministers who had signed the ordinances, those ministers, whose guilt, as it was of the foulest kind, was proved by the clearest evidence,—were punished only with imprisonment. In the first revolution, property was attacked. In the second, it was held sacred. Both revolutions, it is true, left the public mind of France in an unsettled state. Both revolutions were followed by insurrectionary movements. But, after the first revolution, the insurgents were almost always stronger than the law; and, since the second revolution, the law has invariably been found stronger than the insurgents. There is, indeed, much in the present state of France which may well excite the uneasiness of those who desire to see her free, happy, powerful, and secure. Yet, if we compare the present state of France with the state in which she was forty years ago, how vast a change for the better has taken place! How little effect, for example, during the first revolution, would the sentence of a judicial body have produced on an armed and victorious party! If, after the 10th of August, or after the proscription of the Gironde, or after the 9th of Thermidor, or after the carnage of Vendémiaire, or after the arrests of Fructidor, any tribunal had decided against the conquerors in favour of the conquered, with what contempt, with what derision, would its award have been received! The judges would have lost their heads, or would have been sent to die in some unwholesome colony. The fate of the victim whom they had endeavoured to save would only have been made darker and more hopeless by their interference. We have lately seen a signal proof that, in France, the law is now stronger than the sword. We have seen a government, in the very moment of triumph and revenge, submitting itself to the authority of a court of law. A just and independent sentence has been pronounced—a sentence worthy of the ancient renown of that magistracy to which belong the noblest recollections of French history—which, in an age of persecutors, produced L'Hôpital,—which, in an age of courtiers, produced D'Aguesseau,—which, in an age of wickedness and madness, exhibited to mankind a pattern of every virtue in the life and in the death of Malesherbes. The respectful manner in which that sentence has been received is alone sufficient to show how widely the French of this generation differ from their fathers. And how is the difference to be explained? The race, the soil, the climate, are the same. If those dull, honest Englishmen, who explain the events of 1793 and 1794 by saying that the French are naturally frivolous and cruel, were in the right, why is the guillotine now standing idle? Not surely for want of Carlists, of aristocrats, of people guilty of incivism, of people suspected of being suspicious characters. Is not the true explanation this, that the Frenchman of 1832 has been far better governed than the Frenchman of 1789,—that his soul has never been galled by the oppressive privileges of a separate caste,—that he has been in some degree accustomed to discuss political questions, and to perform political functions,—that he has lived for seventeen or eighteen years under institutions which, however defective, have yet been far superior to any institutions that had before existed in France?

As the second French Revolution has been far milder than the first, so that great change which has just been effected in England has been milder even than the second French Revolution,—milder than any revolution recorded in history. Some orators have described the reform of the House of Commons as a revolution. Others have denied the propriety of the term. The question, though in seeming merely a question of definition, suggests much curious and interesting matter for reflection. If we look at the magnitude of the reform, it may well be called a revolution. If we look at the means by which it has been effected, it is merely an Act of Parliament, regularly brought in, read, committed, and passed. In the whole history of England, there is no prouder circumstance than this,—that a change, which could not, in any other age, or in any other country, have been effected without physical violence, should here have been effected by the force of reason, and under the forms of law. The work of three civil wars has been accomplished by three sessions of Parliament. An ancient and deeply rooted system of abuses has been fiercely attacked and stubbornly defended. It has fallen; and not one sword has been drawn; not one estate has been confiscated; not one family has been forced to emigrate. The bank has kept its credit. The funds have kept their price. Every man has gone forth to his work and to his labour till the evening. During the fiercest excitement of the contest,—during the first fortnight of that immortal May,—there was not one moment at which any sanguinary act committed on the person of any of the most unpopular men in England would not have filled the country with horror and indignation.

And now that the victory is won, has it been abused? An immense mass of power has been transferred from an oligarchy to the nation. Are the members of the vanquished oligarchy insecure? Does the nation seem disposed to play the tyrant? Are not those who, in any other state of society, would have been visited with the severest vengeance of the triumphant party,—would have been pining in dungeons, or flying to foreign countries,—still enjoying their possessions and their honours, still taking part as freely as ever in public affairs? Two years ago they were dominant. They are now vanquished. Yet the whole people would regard with horror any man who should dare to propose any vindictive measure. So common is this feeling,—so much is it a matter of course among us,—that many of our readers will scarcely understand what we see to admire in it.

To what are we to attribute the unparalleled moderation and humanity which the English people had displayed at this great conjuncture? The answer is plain. This moderation, this humanity, are the fruits of a hundred and fifty years of liberty. During many generations we have had legislative assemblies which, however defective their constitution might be, have always contained many members chosen by the people, and many others eager to obtain the approbation of the people :—assemblies in which perfect freedom of debate was allowed ;—assemblies in which the smallest minority had a fair hearing ; assemblies in which abuses, even when they were not redressed, were at least exposed. For many generations we have had the trial by jury, the Habeas Corpus Act, the freedom of the press, the right of meeting to discuss public affairs, the right of petitioning the legislature. A vast portion of the population has long been accustomed to the exercise of political functions, and has been thoroughly seasoned to political excitement. In most other countries there is no middle course between absolute submission and open rebellion. In England there has always been for centuries a constitutional opposition. Thus our institutions had been so good that they had educated us into a capacity for better institutions. There is not a large town in the kingdom which does not contain better materials for a legislature than all France could furnish in 1789. There is not a spouting-club at any pot-house in London in which the rules of debate are not better understood, and more strictly observed, than in the Constituent Assembly. There is scarcely a Political Union which could not frame in half an hour a declaration of rights superior to that which occupied the collective wisdom of France for several months.

It would be impossible even to glance at all the causes of the French Revolution within the limits to which we must confine ourselves. One thing is clear. The government, the aristocracy, and the church were rewarded after their works. They reaped that which they had sown. They found the nation such as they had made it. That the people had become possessed of irresistible power before they had attained the slightest knowledge of the art of government—that practical questions of vast moment were left to be solved by men to whom politics had been only matter of theory—that a legislature was composed of persons who were scarcely fit to compose a debating society—that the whole nation was ready to lend an ear to any flatterer who appealed to its cupidity, to its fears, or to its thirst for vengeance—all this was the effect of misrule, obstinately continued in defiance of solemn warnings, and of the visible signs of an approaching retribution.

Even while the monarchy seemed to be in its highest and most palmy state, the causes of that great destruction had already begun to operate. They may be distinctly traced even under the reign of Louis the Fourteenth. That reign is the time to which the Ultra-Royalists refer as the Golden Age of France. It was in truth one of those periods which shine with an unnatural and delusive splendour, and which are rapidly followed by gloom and decay.

Concerning Louis the Fourteenth himself, the world seems at last to have formed a correct judgment. He was not a great general ; he was not a great statesman ; but he was, in one sense of the words, a great king. Never was there so consummate a master of what our James the First would have called kingcraft,—of all those arts which most advantageously display the merits of a prince, and most completely hide his defects. Though his internal administration was bad,—though the military triumphs which gave splendour to the early part of his reign were not achieved by himself,—though his later years were crowded with defeats and humiliations,—though he was so ignorant that he scarcely understood the Latin of his mass-book,—though he fell under the control of a cunning Jesuit and of a more cunning old woman,—he succeeded in passing himself off on his people as a being above humanity. And this is the more extraordinary because he did not seclude himself from the public gaze like those Oriental despots whose faces are never seen, and whose very names it is a crime to pronounce lightly. It has been said that no man is a hero to his valet ;—and all the world saw as much of Louis the Fourteenth as his valet could see. Five hundred people assembled to see him shave and put on his breeches in the morning. He then kneeled down at the side of his bed, and said his prayer while the whole assembly awaited the end in solemn silence—the ecclesiastics on their knees, and the laymen with their hats before their faces. He walked about his gardens with a train of two hundred courtiers at his heels. All Versailles came to see him dine and sup. He was put to bed at night in the midst of a crowd as great as that which had met to see him rise in the morning. He took his very emetics in state, and vomited majestically in the presence of all the *grandes* and *petites entrées*. Yet, though he constantly exposed himself to the public gaze in situations in which it is scarcely possible for any man to preserve much personal dignity, he to the last impressed those who surrounded him with the deepest awe and reverence. The illusion which he produced on his worshippers can be compared only to those illusions to which lovers are proverbially subject during the season of courtship. It was an illusion which affected even the senses. The contemporaries of Louis thought him tall. Voltaire, who might have seen him, and who had lived with some of the most distinguished members of his court, speaks repeatedly of his majestic stature. Yet it is as certain as any fact can be, that he was rather below than above the middle size. He had, it seems, a way of holding himself, a way of walking, a way of swelling his chest and rearing his head, which deceived the eyes of the multitude. Eighty years after his death; the royal cemetery was violated by the revolutionists, his coffin was opened ; his body was dragged out ; and it appeared that the prince, whose majestic figure had been so long and loudly extolled, was in truth a little man.* That fine expression of Juvenal is singularly applicable, both in its literal and in its metaphorical sense, to Louis the Fourteenth :

> "Mors sola fatetur
> Quantula sint hominum corpuscula."

His person and his government have had the same fate. He had the art of making both appear grand and august, in spite of the clearest evidence that both were below the ordinary standard. Death and time have exposed both the deceptions. The body of the great king has been measured more justly than it was measured by the courtiers who were afraid to look above his shoe-tie. His public character has been scrutinized by men free from the hopes and fears of Boileau and Molière. In the grave, the most majestic of princes is only five feet eight. In history, the hero and the politician dwindles into a vain and feeble tyrant,—the slave of priests and women—little in war,—little in government,—little in everything but the art of simulating greatness.

He left to his infant successor a famished and miserable people, a beaten and humbled army, provinces turned into deserts by misgovernment and persecution, factions dividing the court, a schism raging in the church, an immense debt, an empty treasury, immeasurable palaces, an innumerable household, inestimable jewels and furniture. All the sap and nutriment of the state seemed to have been drawn to feed one bloated and unwholesome excrescence. The nation was withered. The court was morbidly flourishing. Yet it does not appear that the associations which attached the people to the monarchy had lost strength during his reign. He had neglected or sacrificed their dearest interests; but he had struck their imaginations. The very things which ought to have made him most unpopular,—the prodigies of luxury and magnificence with which his person was surrounded, while, beyond the inclosure of his parks, nothing was to be seen but starvation and despair,—seemed to increase the respectful attachment which his subjects felt for him. That governments exist only for the good of the people, appears to be the most obvious and simple of all truths. Yet history proves that it is one of the most recondite. We can scarcely wonder that it should be so seldom present to the minds of rulers, when we see how slowly, and through how much suffering, nations arrive at the knowledge of it.

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* Even M. de Chateaubriand, to whom we should have thought all the Bourbons would have seemed at least six feet high, admits this fact. "C'est une erreur," says he in his strange memoirs of the Duke of Berri, "de croire que Louis XIV. étoit d'une haute stature. Une cuirasse qui nous reste de lui, et les exhumations de St Denys, n'ont laissé sur ce point aucun doute."

There was indeed one Frenchman who had discovered those principles which it now seems impossible to miss,—that the many are not made for the use of one,—that the truly good government is not that which concentrates magnificence in a court, but that which diffuses happiness among a people,—that a king who gains victory after victory, and adds province to province, may deserve, not the admiration, but the abhorrence and contempt of mankind. These were the doctrines which Fénélon taught. Considered as an epic poem, Telemachus can scarcely be placed above Glover's Leonidas or Wilkie's Epigoniad. Considered as a treatise on politics and morals, it abounds with errors of detail; and the truths which it inculcates seem trite to a modern reader. But, if we compare the spirit in which it is written with the spirit which pervades the rest of the French literature of that age, we shall perceive that, though in appearance trite, it was in truth one of the most original works that have ever appeared. The fundamental principles of Fénélon's political morality, the tests by which he judged of institutions and of men, were absolutely new to his countrymen. He had taught them indeed, with the happiest effect, to his royal pupil. But how incomprehensible they were to most people, we learn from Saint Simon. That amusing writer tells us, as a thing almost incredible, that the Duke of Burgundy declared it to be his opinion that kings existed for the good of the people, and not the people for the good of kings. Saint Simon is delighted with the benevolence of this saying; but startled by its novelty and terrified by its boldness. Indeed he distinctly says that it was not safe to repeat the sentiment in the court of Louis. Saint Simon was, of all the members of that court, the least courtly. He was as nearly an oppositionist as any man of his time. His disposition was proud, bitter, and cynical. In religion he was a Jansenist; in politics, a less hearty royalist than most of his neighbours. His opinions and his temper had preserved him from the illusions which the demeanour of Louis produced on others. He neither loved nor respected the king. Yet even this man,—one of the most liberal men in France,—was struck dumb with astonishment at hearing the fundamental axiom of all government propounded,—an axiom which, in our time, nobody in England or France would dispute,—which the stoutest Tory takes for granted as much as the fiercest Radical, and concerning which the Carlist would agree with the most republican deputy of the "extreme left." No person will do justice to

Fénelon, who does not constantly keep in mind that Telemachus was written in an age and nation in which bold and independent thinkers stared to hear that twenty millions of human beings did not exist for the gratification of one. That work is commonly considered as a school-book, very fit for children, because its style is easy and its morality blameless, but unworthy of the attention of statesmen and philosophers. We can distinguish in it, if we are not greatly mistaken, the first faint dawn of a long and splendid day of intellectual light,—the dim promise of a great deliverance,—the undeveloped germ of the charter and of the code.

What mighty interests were staked on the life of the Duke of Burgundy! and how different an aspect might the history of France have borne if he had attained the age of his grandfather or of his son;—if he had been permitted to show how much could be done for humanity by the highest virtue in the highest fortune! There is scarcely anything in history more remarkable than the descriptions which remain to us of that extraordinary man. The fierce and impetuous temper which he showed in early youth,—the complete change which a judicious education produced in his character,—his fervid piety,—his large benevolence,—the strictness with which he judged himself,—the liberality with which he judged others,—the fortitude with which alone, in the whole court, he stood up against the commands of Louis, when a religious scruple was concerned,—the charity with which alone, in the whole court, he defended the profligate Orleans against calumniators,—his great projects for the good of the people,—his activity in business,—his taste for letters,—his strong domestic attachments,—even the ungraceful person and the shy and awkward manner which concealed from the eyes of the sneering courtiers of his grandfather so many rare endowments,—make his character the most interesting that is to be found in the annals of his house. He had resolved, if he came to the throne, to disperse that ostentatious court, which was supported at an expense ruinous to the nation,—to preserve peace,—to correct the abuses which were found in every part of the system of revenue,—to abolish or modify oppressive privileges,—to reform the administration of justice,—to revive the institution of the States-General. If he had ruled over France during forty or fifty years, that great movement of the human mind, which no government could have arrested, which bad government only rendered more violent, would, we are inclined to think, have been conducted, by peaceable means to a happy termination.

Disease and sorrow removed from the world that wisdom and virtue of which it was not worthy. During two generations France was ruled by men who, with all the vices of Louis the Fourteenth, had none of the art by which that magnificent prince passed off his vices for virtues. The people had now to see tyranny naked. That foul Duessa was stripped of her gorgeous ornaments. She had always been hideous; but a strange enchantment had made her seem fair and glorious in the eyes of her willing slaves. The spell was now broken; the deformity was made manifest; and the lovers, lately so happy and so proud, turned away loathing and horror-struck.

First came the Regency. The strictness with which Louis had, towards the close of his life, exacted from those around him an outward attention to religious duties, produced an effect similar to that which the rigour of the Puritans had produced in England. It was the boast of Madame de Maintenon, in the time of her greatness, that devotion had become the fashion. A fashion indeed it was; and, like a fashion, it passed away. The austerity of the tyrant's old age had injured the morality of the higher orders more than even the licentiousness of his youth. Not only had he not reformed their vices, but, by forcing them to be hypocrites, he had shaken their belief in virtue. They had found it so easy to perform the grimace of piety, that it was natural for them to consider all piety as grimace. The times were changed. Pensions, regiments, and abbeys, were no longer to be obtained by regular confession and severe penance: and the obsequious courtiers, who had kept Lent like monks of La Trappe, and who had turned up the whites of their eyes at the edifying parts of sermons preached before the king, aspired to the title of *roué* as ardently as they had aspired to that of *dévot;* and went, during Passion Week, to the revels of the Palais Royal as readily as they had formerly repaired to the sermons of Massillon.

The Regent was in many respects the fac-simile of our Charles the Second. Like Charles, he was a good-natured man, utterly destitute of sensibility. Like Charles, he had good natural talents, which a deplorable indolence rendered useless to the state. Like Charles, he thought all men corrupted and interested, and yet did not dislike them for being so. His opinion of human nature was Gulliver's; but he did not regard human nature with Gulliver's horror. He thought that he and his fellow-creatures were Yahoos; and he thought a Yahoo a very agreeable kind of animal. No princes were ever more social than Charles and Philip of Orleans: yet no princes ever had less capacity for friendship. The tempers of these clever cynics were so easy, and their minds so languid, that habit supplied in them the place of affection, and made them the tools of people for whom they cared not one straw. In love, both were mere sensualists without delicacy or tenderness. In politics, both were utterly careless of faith and of national honour. Charles shut up the Exchequer. Philip patronised the System. The councils of Charles were swayed by the gold of Barillon; the councils of Philip by the gold of Walpole. Charles for private objects made war on Holland, the natural ally of England. Philip for private objects made war on the Spanish branch of the house of Bourbon, the natural ally, indeed the creature of France. Even in trifling circumstances the parallel might be carried on. Both these princes were fond of experimental philosophy, and passed in the laboratory much time which would have been more advantageously passed at the council-table. Both were more strongly attached to their female relatives than to any other human being; and in both cases it was suspected that this attachment was not perfectly innocent. In personal courage, and in all the virtues which are connected with personal courage, the Regent was indisputably superior to Charles. Indeed Charles but narrowly escaped the stain of cowardice. Philip was eminently brave, and, like most brave men, was generally open and sincere. Charles added dissimulation to his other vices.

The administration of the Regent was scarcely less pernicious, and infinitely more scandalous, than that of the deceased monarch. It was by magnificent public works, and by wars conducted on a gigantic scale, that Louis had brought distress on his people. The Regent aggravated that distress by frauds of which a lame duck on the stock-exchange would have been ashamed. France, even while suffering under the most severe calamities, had reverenced the conqueror. She despised the swindler.

When Orleans and the wretched Dubois had disappeared, the power passed to the Duke of Bourbon; a prince degraded in the public eye by the infamously lucrative part which he had taken in the juggles of the System, and by the humility with which he bore the caprices of a loose and imperious woman. It seemed to be decreed that every branch of the royal family should successively incur the abhorrence and contempt of the nation.

Between the fall of the Duke of Bourbon and the death of Fleury, a few years of frugal and moderate government intervened. Then recommenced the downward progress of the monarchy. Profligacy in the court, extravagance in the finances, schism in the church, faction in the Parliaments, unjust war terminated by ignominious peace,—all that indicates and all that produces the ruin of great empires, make up the history of that miserable period. Abroad, the French were beaten and humbled everywhere, by land and by sea, on the Elbe and on the Rhine, in Asia and in America. At home, they were turned over from vizier to vizier, and from sultana to sultana, till they had reached that point beneath which there was no lower abyss of infamy,—till the yoke of Maupeou had made them pine for Choiseul,—till Madame du Barri had taught them to regret Madame de Pompadour.

But unpopular as the monarchy had become, the aristocracy was more unpopular still; and not without reason. The tyranny of an individual is far more supportable than the tyranny of a caste. The old privileges were galling and hateful to the new wealth and the new knowledge. Everything indicated the approach of no common revolution,—of a revolution destined to change, not merely the form of government, but the distribution of property and the whole social system,—of a revolution the effects of which were to be felt at every fireside in France,—of a new Jaquerie, in which the victory was to remain with *Jaques bonhomme.* In the van of the movement were the moneyed men and the men of letters,—the wounded pride of wealth, and the wounded pride of intellect. An immense multitude, made ignorant and cruel by oppression, was raging in the rear.

We greatly doubt whether any course which could have been pursued by Louis the Sixteenth could have averted a great convulsion. But we are sure that, if there was such a course, it was the course recommended by M. Turgot. The church and the aristocracy, with that blindness to danger, that incapacity of believing that anything can be except what has been, which the long possession of power seldom fails to generate, mocked at the counsel which might have saved them. They would not have reform; and they had revolution. They would not pay a small contribution in place of the odious corvées; and they lived to see their castles demolished, and their lands sold to strangers. They would not endure Turgot; and they were forced to endure Robespierre.

Then the rulers of France, as if smitten with judicial blindness, plunged headlong into the American war. They thus committed at once two great errors. They encouraged the spirit of revolution. They augmented at the same time those public burdens, the pressure of which is generally the immediate cause of revolutions. The event of the war carried to the height the enthusiasm of speculative democrats. The financial difficulties produced by the war carried to the height the discontent of that larger body of people who cared little about theories, and much about taxes.

The meeting of the States-General was the signal for the explosion of all the hoarded passions of a century. In that assembly, there were undoubtedly very able men. But they had no practical knowledge of the art of government. All the great English revolutions have been conducted by practical statesmen. The French Revolution was conducted by mere speculators. Our constitution has never been so far behind the age as to have become an object of aversion to the people. The English revolutions have therefore been undertaken for the purpose of defending, correcting, and restoring,—never for the mere purpose of destroying. Our countrymen have always, even in times of the greatest excitement, spoken reverently of the form of government under which they lived, and attacked only what they regarded as its corruptions. In the very act of innovating they have constantly appealed to ancient prescription ; they have seldom looked abroad for models ; they have seldom troubled themselves with Utopian theories ; they have not been anxious to prove that liberty is a natural right of men ; they have been content to regard it as the lawful birthright of Englishmen. Their social contract is no fiction. It is still extant on the original parchment, sealed with wax which was affixed at Runnymede, and attested by the lordly names of the Marischals and Fitzherberts. No general arguments about the original equality of men, no fine stories out of Plutarch and Cornelius Nepos, have ever affected them so much as their own familiar words,—Magna Charta,—Habeas Corpus,—Trial by Jury,—Bill of Rights. This part of our national character has undoubtedly its disadvantages. An Englishman too often reasons on politics in the spirit rather of a lawyer than of a philosopher. There is too often something narrow, something exclusive, something Jewish, if we may use the word, in his love of freedom. He is disposed to consider popular rights as the special heritage of the chosen race to which he belongs. He is inclined rather to repel than to encourage the alien proselyte who aspires to a share of his privileges. Very different was the spirit of the Constituent Assembly. They had none of our narrowness ; but they had none of our practical skill in the management of affairs. They did not understand how to regulate the order of their own debates ; and they thought themselves able to legislate for the whole world. All the past was loathsome to them. All their agreeable associations were connected with the future. Hopes were to them all that recollections are to us. In the institutions of their country they found nothing to love or to admire. As far back as they could look, they saw only the tyranny of one class and the degradation of another,—Frank and Gaul, knight and villein, gentleman and *roturier.* They hated the monarchy, the church, the nobility. They cared nothing for the States or the Parliament. It was long the fashion to ascribe all the follies which they committed to the writings of the philosophers. We believe that it was misrule, and nothing but misrule, that put the sting into those writings. It is not true that the French abandoned experience for theories. They took up with theories because they had no experience of good government. It was because they had no charter that they ranted about the original contract. As soon as tolerable institutions were given to them, they began to look to those institutions. In 1830 their rallying cry was *Vive la Charte.* In 1789 they had nothing but theories round which to rally. They had seen social distinctions only in a bad form ; and it was therefore natural that they should be deluded by sophisms about the equality of men. They had experienced so much evil from the sovereignty of kings that they might be excused for lending a ready ear to those who preached, in an exaggerated form, the doctrine of the sovereignty of the people.

The English, content with their own national recollections and names, have never sought for models in the institutions of Greece or Rome. The French, having nothing in their own history to which they could look back with pleasure, had recourse to the history of the great ancient commonwealths: they drew their notions of those commonwealths, not from contemporary writers, but from romances written by pedantic moralists long after the extinction of public liberty. They neglected Thucydides for Plutarch. Blind themselves, they took blind guides. They had no experience of freedom; and they took their opinions concerning it from men who had no more experience of it than themselves, and whose imaginations, inflamed by mystery and privation, exaggerated the unknown enjoyment;—from men who raved about patriotism without having ever had a country, and eulogised tyrannicide while crouching before tyrants. The maxim which the French legislators learned in this school was, that political liberty is an end, and not a means; that it is not merely valuable as the great safeguard of order, of property, and of morality, but that it is in itself a high and exquisite happiness to which order, property, and morality ought without one scruple to be sacrificed. The lessons which may be learned from ancient history are indeed most useful and important; but they were not likely to be learned by men who, in all their rhapsodies about the Athenian democracy, seemed utterly to forget that in that democracy there were ten slaves to one citizen; and who constantly decorated their invectives against the aristocrats with panegyrics on Brutus and Cato,—two aristocrats, fiercer, prouder, and more exclusive, than any that emigrated with the Count of Artois.

We have never met with so vivid and interesting a picture of the National Assembly as that which M. Dumont has set before us. His Mirabeau, in particular, is incomparable. All the former Mirabeaus were daubs in comparison. Some were merely painted from the imagination—others were gross caricatures: this is the very individual, neither god nor demon, but a man—a Frenchman—a Frenchman of the eighteenth century, with great talents, with strong passions, depraved by bad education, surrounded by temptations of every kind,—made desperate at one time by disgrace, and then again intoxicated by fame. All his opposite and seemingly inconsistent qualities are in this representation so blended together as to make up a harmonious and natural whole. Till now, Mirabeau was to us, and, we believe, to most readers of history, not a man, but a string of antitheses. Henceforth he will be a real human being, a remarkable and eccentric being indeed, but perfectly conceivable.

He was fond, M. Dumont tells us, of giving odd compound nicknames. Thus, M. de Lafayette was Grandison-Cromwell; the King of Prussia was Alaric-Cottin; D'Espremenil was Crispin-Catiline. We think that Mirabeau himself might be described, after his own fashion, as a Wilkes-Chatham. He had Wilkes's sensuality, Wilkes's levity, Wilkes's insensibility to shame. Like Wilkes, he had brought on himself the censure even of men of pleasure by the peculiar grossness of his immorality, and by the obscenity of his writings. Like Wilkes, he was heedless, not only of the laws of morality, but of the laws of honour. Yet he affected, like Wilkes, to unite the character of the demagogue to that of the fine gentleman. Like Wilkes, he conciliated, by his good-humour and his high spirits, the regard of many who despised his character. Like Wilkes, he was hideously ugly; like Wilkes, he made a jest of his own ugliness; and, like Wilkes, he was, in spite of his ugliness, very attentive to his dress, and very successful in affairs of gallantry.

Resembling Wilkes in the lower and grosser parts of his character, he had, in his higher qualities, some affinity to Chatham. His eloquence, as far as we can judge of it, bore no inconsiderable resemblance to that of the great English minister. He was not eminently successful in long set speeches. He was not, on the other hand, a close and ready debater. Sudden bursts, which seemed to be the effect of inspiration—short sentences which came like lightning, dazzling, burning, striking down everything before them—sentences which, spoken at critical moments, decided the fate of great questions—sentences which at once became proverbs—sentences which everybody still knows by heart—in these chiefly lay the oratorical power both of Chatham and of Mirabeau. There have been far greater speakers, and far greater statesmen, than either of them ; but we doubt whether any men have, in modern times, exercised such vast personal influence over stormy and divided assemblies. The power of both was as much moral as intellectual. In true dignity of character, in private and public virtue, it may seem absurd to institute any comparison between them ; but they had the same haughtiness and vehemence of temper. In their language and manner there was a disdainful self-confidence, an imperiousness, a fierceness of passion, before which all common minds quailed. Even Murray and Charles Townshend, though intellectually not inferior to Chatham, were always cowed by him. Barnave, in the same manner, though the best debater in the National Assembly, flinched before the energy of Mirabeau. Men, except in bad novels, are not all good or all evil. It can scarcely be denied that the virtue of Lord Chatham was a little theatrical. On the other hand there was in Mirabeau, not indeed anything deserving the name of virtue, but that imperfect substitute for virtue which is found in almost all superior minds,—a sensibility to the beautiful and the good, which sometimes amounted to sincere enthusiasm ; and which, mingled with the desire of admiration, sometimes gave to his character a lustre resembling the lustre of true goodness,—as the "faded splendour wan" which lingered round the fallen archangel resembled the exceeding brightness of those spirits who had kept their first estate.

There are several other admirable portraits of eminent men in these Memoirs. That of Sieyes in particular, and that of Talleyrand, are master-pieces, full of life and expression. But nothing in the book has interested us more than the view which M. Dumont has presented to us, unostentatiously, and, we may say, unconsciously, of his own character. The sturdy rectitude, the large charity, the good-nature, the modesty, the independent spirit, the ardent philanthropy, the unaffected indifference to money and to fame, make up a character which, while it has nothing unnatural, seems to us to approach nearer to perfection than any of the Grandisons and Allworthys of fiction. The work is not indeed precisely such a work as we had anticipated—it is more lively, more picturesque, more amusing than we had promised ourselves ; and it is, on the other hand, less profound and philosophic. But, if it is not, in all respects, such as might have been expected from the intellect of M. Dumont, it is assuredly such as might have been expected from his heart.

BARÈRE.

(APRIL 1844.)

Memoires de Bertrand Barère; publiés par MM. HIPPOLYTE CARNOT, Membre de la Chambre des Députés, et DAVID d'Angers, Membre de l'Institut : précédés d'une Notice Historique par H. CARNOT. 4 tomes. Paris: 1843.

THIS book has more than one title to our serious attention. It is an appeal, solemnly made to posterity by a man who played a conspicuous part in great events, and who represents himself as deeply aggrieved by the rash and malevolent censure of his contemporaries. To such an appeal we shall always give ready audience. We can perform no duty more useful to society, or more agreeable to our own feelings, than that of making, as far as our power extends, reparation to the slandered and persecuted benefactors of mankind. We therefore promptly took into our consideration this copious apology for the life of Bertrand Barère. We have made up our minds; and we now purpose to do him, by the blessing of God, full and signal justice. It is to be observed that the appellant in this case does not come into court alone. He is attended to the bar of public opinion by two compurgators who occupy highly honourable stations. One of these is M. David of Angers, member of the institute, an eminent sculptor, and, if we have been rightly informed, a favourite pupil, though not a kinsman, of the painter who bore the same name. The other, to whom we owe the biographical preface, is M. Hippolyte Carnot, member of the Chamber of Deputies, and son of the celebrated Director. In the judgment of M. David and of M. Hippolyte Carnot, Barère was a deserving and an ill-used man—a man who, though by no means faultless, must yet, when due allowance is made for the force of circumstances and the infirmity of human nature, be considered as on the whole entitled to our esteem. It will be for the public to determine, after a full hearing, whether the editors have, by thus connecting their names with that of Barère, raised his character or lowered their own.

We are not conscious that, when we opened this book, we were under the influence of any feeling likely to pervert our judgment. Undoubtedly we had long entertained a most unfavourable opinion of Barère: but to this opinion we were not tied by any passion or by any interest. Our dislike was a reasonable dislike, and might have been removed by reason. Indeed our expectation was, that these Memoirs would in some measure clear Barère's fame. That he could vindicate himself from all the charges which had been brought against him, we knew to be impossible; and his editors admit that he has not done so. But we thought it highly probable that some grave accusations would be refuted, and that many offences to which he would have been forced to plead guilty would be greatly extenuated. We were not disposed to be severe. We were fully aware that temptations such as those to which the members of the Convention and of the Committee of Public Safety were exposed must try severely the strength of the firmest virtue. Indeed our inclination has always been to regard with an indulgence, which to some rigid moralists appears excessive, those faults into which gentle and noble spirits are sometimes hurried by the excitement of conflict, by the maddening influence of sympathy, and by ill-regulated zeal for a public cause.

With such feelings we read this book, and compared it with other accounts of the events in which Barère bore a part. It is now our duty to express the opinion to which this investigation has led us.

Our opinion then is this: that Barère approached nearer than any person mentioned in history or fiction, whether man or devil, to the idea of consummate and universal depravity. In him the qualities which are the proper objects of hatred, and the qualities which are the proper objects of contempt, preserve an exquisite and absolute harmony. In almost every particular sort of wickedness he has had rivals. His sensuality was immoderate; but this was a failing common to him with many great and amiable men. There have been many men as cowardly as he, some as cruel, a few as mean, a few as impudent. There may also have been as great liars, though we never met with them or read of them. But when we put everything together, sensuality, poltroonery, baseness, effrontery, mendacity, barbarity, the result is something which in a novel we should condemn as caricature, and to which, we venture to say, no parallel can be found in history.

It would be grossly unjust, we acknowledge, to try a man situated as Barère was by a severe standard. Nor have we done so. We have formed our opinion of him, by comparing him, not with politicians of stainless character, not with Chancellor D'Aguesseau, or General Washington, or Mr Wilberforce, or Earl Grey, but with his own colleagues of the Mountain. That party included a considerable number of the worst men that ever lived; but we see in it nothing like Barère. Compared with him, Fouché seems honest; Billaud seems humane; Hébert seems to rise into dignity. Every other chief of a party, says M. Hippolyte Carnot, has found apologists: one set of men exalts the Girondists; another set justifies Danton; a third deifies Robespierre: but Barère has remained without a defender. We venture to suggest a very simple solution of this phenomenon. All the other chiefs of parties had some good qualities; and Barère had none. The genius, courage, patriotism, and humanity of the Girondist statesmen more than atoned for what was culpable in their conduct, and should have protected them from the insult of being compared with such a thing as Barère. Danton and Robespierre were indeed bad men; but in both of them some important parts of the mind remained sound. Danton was brave and resolute, fond of pleasure, of power, and of distinction, with vehement passions, with lax principles, but with some kind and manly feelings, capable of great crimes, but capable also of friendship and of compassion. He, therefore, naturally finds admirers among persons of bold and sanguine dispositions. Robespierre was a vain, envious, and suspicious man, with a hard heart, weak nerves, and a gloomy temper. But we cannot with truth deny that he was, in the vulgar sense of the word, disinterested, that his private life was correct, or that he was sincerely zealous for his own system of politics and morals. He, therefore, naturally finds admirers among honest but moody and bitter democrats. If no class has taken the reputation of Barère under its patronage, the reason is plain: Barère had not a single virtue, nor even the semblance of one.

It is true that he was not, as far as we are able to judge, originally of a savage disposition; but this circumstance seems to us only to aggravate his guilt. There are some unhappy men constitutionally prone to the darker passions, men all whose blood is gall, and to whom bitter words and harsh actions are as natural as snarling and biting to a ferocious dog. To come into the world with this wretched mental disease is a greater calamity than to be born blind or deaf. A man who, having such a temper, keeps it in subjection, and constrains himself to behave habitually with justice and humanity towards those who are in his power, seems to us worthy of the highest admiration. There have been instances of this self-command; and they are among the most signal triumphs of philosophy and religion. On the other hand, a man who, having been blessed by nature with a bland disposition, gradually brings himself to inflict misery on his fellow-creatures with indifference, with satisfaction, and at length with a hideous rapture, deserves to be regarded as a portent of wickedness; and such a man was Barère. The history of his downward progress is full of instruction. Weakness, cowardice, and fickleness were born with him; the best quality which he received from nature was a good temper. These, it is true, are not very promising materials; yet, out of materials as unpromising, high sentiments of piety and of honour have sometimes made martyrs and heroes. Rigid principles often do for feeble minds what stays do for feeble bodies. But Barère had no principles at all. His character was equally destitute of natural and of acquired strength. Neither in the commerce of life, nor in books, did we ever become acquainted with any mind so unstable, so utterly destitute of tone, so incapable of independent thought and earnest preference, so ready to take impressions and so ready to lose them. He resembled those creepers which must lean on something, and which, as soon as their prop is removed, fall down in utter helplessness. He could no more stand up, erect and self-supported, in any cause, than the ivy can rear itself like the oak, or the wild vine shoot to heaven like the cedar of Lebanon. It is barely possible that, under good guidance and in favourable circumstances, such a man might have slipped through life without discredit. But the unseaworthy craft, which even in still water would have been in danger of going down from its own rottenness, was launched on a raging ocean, amidst a storm in which a whole armada of gallant ships was cast away. The weakest and most servile of human beings found himself on a sudden an actor in a Revolution which convulsed the whole civilised world. At first he fell under the influence of humane and moderate men, and talked the language of humanity and moderation. But he soon found himself surrounded by fierce and resolute spirits, scared by no danger and restrained by no scruple. He had to choose whether he would be their victim or their accomplice. His choice was soon made. He tasted blood, and felt no loathing; he tasted it again, and liked it well. Cruelty became with him, first a habit, then a passion, at last a madness. So complete and rapid was the degeneracy of his nature, that within a very few months after the time when he had passed for a good-natured man, he had brought himself to look on the despair and misery of his fellow-creatures with a glee resembling that of the fiends whom Dante saw watching the pool of seething pitch in Malebolge. He had many associates in guilt; but he distinguished himself from them all by the Bacchanalian exultation which he seemed to feel in the work of death. He was drunk with innocent and noble blood, laughed and shouted as he butchered, and howled strange songs and reeled in strange dances amidst the carnage. Then came a sudden and violent turn of fortune. The miserable man was hurled down from the height of power to hopeless ruin and infamy. The shock sobered him at once. The fumes of his horrible intoxication passed away. But he was now so irrecoverably depraved that the discipline of adversity only drove him further into wickedness. Ferocious vices, of which he had never been suspected, had been developed in him by power. Another class of vices, less hateful perhaps, but more despicable, was now developed in him by poverty and disgrace. Having appalled the whole world by great crimes perpetrated under the pretence of zeal for liberty, he became the meanest of all the tools of despotism. It is not easy to settle the order of precedence among his vices, but we are inclined to think that his baseness was, on the whole, a rarer and more marvellous thing than his cruelty.

This is the view which we have long taken of Barère's character; but, till we read these Memoirs, we held our opinion with the diffidence which becomes a judge who has only heard one side. The case seemed strong, and in parts unanswerable: yet we did not know what the accused party might have to say for himself; and, not being much inclined to take our fellow-creatures either for angels of light or for angels of darkness, we could not but feel some suspicion that his offences had been exaggerated. That suspicion is now at an end. The vindication is before us. It occupies four volumes. It was the work of forty years. It would be absurd to suppose that it does not refute every serious charge which admitted of refutation. How many serious charges, then, are here refuted? Not a single one. Most of the imputations which have been thrown on Barère he does not even notice. In such cases, of course, judgment must go against him by default. The fact is, that nothing can be more meagre and uninteresting than his account of the great public transactions in which he was engaged. He gives us hardly a word of new information respecting the proceedings of the Committee of Public Safety; and, by way of compensation, tells us long stories about things which happened before he emerged from obscurity, and after he had again sunk into it. Nor is this the worst. As soon as he ceases to write trifles, he begins to write lies; and such lies! A man who has never been within the tropics does not know what a thunderstorm means; a man who has never looked on Niagara has but a faint idea of a cataract; and he who has not read Barère's Memoirs may be said not to know what it is to lie. Among the numerous classes which make up the great genus *Mendacium*, the *Mendacium Vasconicum*, or Gascon lie, has, during some centuries, been highly esteemed as peculiarly circumstantial and peculiarly impudent; and, among the *Mendacia Vasconica*, the *Mendacium Barerianum* is, without doubt, the finest species. It is indeed a superb variety, and quite throws into the shade some *Mendacia* which we were used to regard with admiration. The *Mendacium Wraxallianum*, for example, though by no means to be despised, will not sustain the comparison for a moment. Seriously, we think that M. Hippolyte Carnot is much to blame in this matter. We can hardly suppose him to be worse read than ourselves in the history of the Convention, a history which must interest him deeply, not only as a Frenchman, but also as a son. He must, therefore, be perfectly aware that many of the most important statements which these volumes contain are falsehoods, such as Corneille's Dorante, or Molière's Scapin, or Colin d'Harleville's Monsieur de Crac would have been ashamed to utter. We are far, indeed, from holding M. Hippolyte Carnot answerable for Barère's want of veracity; but M. Hippolyte Carnot has arranged these Memoirs, has introduced them to the world by a laudatory preface, has described them as documents of great historical value, and has illustrated them by notes. We cannot but think that, by acting thus, he contracted some obligations of which he does not seem to have been at all aware ; and that he ought not to have suffered any monstrous fiction to go forth under the sanction of his name, without adding a line at the foot of the page for the purpose of cautioning the reader.

We will content ourselves at present with pointing out two instances of Barère's wilful and deliberate mendacity ; namely, his account of the death of Marie Antoinette, and his account of the death of the Girondists. His account of the death of Marie Antoinette is as follows :—"Robespierre in his turn proposed that the members of the Capet family should be banished, and that Marie Antoinette should be brought to trial before the Revolutionary Tribunal. He would have been better employed in concerting military measures which might have repaired our disasters in Belgium, and might have arrested the progress of the enemies of the Revolution in the west."—(Vol. ii. p. 312.)

Now, it is notorious that Marie Antoinette was sent before the Revolutionary Tribunal, not at Robespierre's instance, but in direct opposition to Robespierre's wishes. We will cite a single authority, which is quite decisive. Bonaparte, who had no conceivable motive to disguise the truth, who had the best opportunities of knowing the truth, and who, after his marriage with the Archduchess, naturally felt an interest in the fate of his wife's kinswomen, distinctly affirmed that Robespierre opposed the trying of the Queen.* Who, then, was the person who really did propose that the Capet family should be banished, and that Marie Antoinette should be tried? Full information will be found in the *Moniteur.*† From that valuable record it appears that, on the first of August 1793, an orator, deputed by the Committee of Public Safety, addressed the Convention in a long and elaborate discourse. He asked, in passionate language, how it happened that the enemies of the Republic still continued to hope for success. "Is it," he cried, "because we have too long forgotten the crimes of the Austrian woman? Is it because we have shown so strange an indulgence to the race of our ancient tyrants? It is time that this unwise apathy should cease ; it is time to extirpate from the soil of the Republic the last roots of royalty. As for the children of Louis the conspirator, they are hostages for the Republic. The charge of their maintenance shall be reduced to what is necessary for the food and keep of two individuals. The public treasure shall no longer be lavished on creatures who have too long been considered as privileged. But behind them lurks a woman who has been the cause of all the disasters of France, and whose share in every project adverse to the revolution has long been known. National justice claims its rights over her. It is to the tribunal appointed for the trial of conspirators that she ought to be sent. It is only by striking the Austrian woman that you can make Francis and George, Charles and William, sensible of the crimes which their ministers and their armies have committed." The speaker concluded by moving that Marie Antoinette should be brought to judgment, and should, for that end, be forthwith transferred to the Conciergerie ; and that all the members of the house of Capet, with the exception of those who were under the sword of the law, and of the two children of Louis, should be banished from the French territory. The motion was carried without debate.

Now, who was the person who made this speech and this motion? It was Barère himself. It is clear, then, that Barère attributed his own mean insolence and barbarity to one who, whatever his crimes may have been, was in this matter innocent. The only question remaining is, whether Barère was misled by his memory, or wrote a deliberate falsehood.

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* O'Meara's *Voice from St Helena*, ii. 170.

† *Moniteur*, 2d, 7th, and 9th of August 1793.

We are convinced that he wrote a deliberate falsehood. His memory is described by his editors as remarkably good, and must have been bad indeed if he could not remember such a fact as this. It is true that the number of murders in which he subsequently bore a part was so great that he might well confound one with another, that he might well forget what part of the daily hecatomb was consigned to death by himself, and what part by his colleagues. But two circumstances make it quite incredible that the share which he took in the death of Marie Antoinette should have escaped his recollection. She was one of his earliest victims. She was one of his most illustrious victims. The most hardened assassin remembers the first time that he shed blood; and the widow of Louis was no ordinary sufferer. If the question had been about some milliner, butchered for hiding in her garret her brother who had let drop a word against the Jacobin Club—if the question had been about some old nun, dragged to death for having mumbled what were called fanatical words over her beads—Barère's memory might well have deceived him. It would be as unreasonable to expect him to remember all the wretches whom he slew as all the pinches of snuff that he took. But, though Barère murdered many hundreds of human beings, he murdered only one Queen. That he, a small country lawyer, who, a few years before, would have thought himself honoured by a glance or a word from the daughter of so many Cæsars, should call her the Austrian woman, should send her from jail to jail, should deliver her over to the executioner, was surely a great event in his life. Whether he had reason to be proud of it or ashamed of it, is a question on which we may perhaps differ from his editors; but they will admit, we think, that he could not have forgotten it.

We, therefore, confidently charge Barère with having written a deliberate falsehood; and we have no hesitation in saying that we never, in the course of any historical researches that we have happened to make, fell in with a falsehood so audacious, except only the falsehood which we are about to expose.

Of the proceeding against the Girondists, Barère speaks with just severity. He calls it an atrocious injustice perpetrated against the legislators of the republic. He complains that distinguished deputies, who ought to have been readmitted to their seats in the Convention, were sent to the scaffold as conspirators. The day, he exclaims, was a day of mourning for France. It mutilated the national representation; it weakened the sacred principle, that the delegates of the people were inviolable. He protests that he had no share in the guilt. "I have had," he says, "the patience to go through the *Moniteur*, extracting all the charges brought against deputies, and all the decrees for arresting and impeaching deputies. Nowhere will you find my name. I never brought a charge against any of my colleagues, or made a report against any, or drew up an impeachment against any."*

Now, we affirm that this is a lie. We affirm that Barère himself took the lead in the proceedings of the Convention against the Girondists. We affirm that he, on the twenty-eighth of July 1793, proposed a decree for bringing nine Girondist deputies to trial, and for putting to death sixteen other Girondist deputies without any trial at all. We affirm that, when the accused deputies had been brought to trial, and when some apprehension arose that their eloquence might produce an effect even on the Revolutionary Tribunal, Barère did, on the 8th of Brumaire, second a motion for a decree authorising the tribunal to decide without hearing out the defence; and, for the truth of every one of these things so affirmed by us, we appeal to the very *Moniteur* to which Barère has dared to appeal.*

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* Vol. ii. 407.

What M. Hippolyte Carnot, knowing, as he must know, that this book contains such falsehoods as those which we have exposed, can have meant, when he described it as a valuable addition to our stock of historical information, passes our comprehension. When a man is not ashamed to tell lies about events which took place before hundreds of witnesses, and which are recorded in well-known and accessible books, what credit can we give to his account of things done in corners? No historian who does not wish to be laughed at will ever cite the unsupported authority of Barère as sufficient to prove any fact whatever. The only thing, as far as we can see, on which these volumes throw any light, is the exceeding baseness of the author.

So much for the veracity of the Memoirs. In a literary point of view, they are beneath criticism. They are as shallow, flippant, and affected, as Barère's oratory in the Convention. They are also, what his oratory in the Convention was not, utterly insipid. In fact, they are the mere dregs and rinsings of a bottle of which even the first froth was but of very questionable flavour.

We will now try to present our readers with a sketch of this man's life. We shall, of course, make very sparing use indeed of his own Memoirs; and never without distrust, except where they are confirmed by other evidence.

Bertrand Barère was born in the year 1755, at Tarbes in Gascony. His father was the proprietor of a small estate at Vieuzac, in the beautiful vale of Argelès. Bertrand always loved to be called Barère de Vieuzac, and flattered himself with the hope that, by the help of this feudal addition to his name, he might pass for a gentleman. He was educated for the bar at Toulouse, the seat of one of the most celebrated parliaments of the kingdom, practised as an advocate with considerable success, and wrote some small pieces, which he sent to the principal literary societies in the south of France. Among provincial towns, Toulouse seems to have been remarkably rich in indifferent versifiers and critics. It gloried especially in one venerable institution, called the Academy of the Floral Games. This body held every year a grand meeting which was a subject of intense interest to the whole city, and at which flowers of gold and silver were given as prizes for odes, for idyls, and for something that was called eloquence. These bounties produced of course the ordinary effect of bounties, and turned people who might have been thriving attorneys and useful apothecaries into small wits and bad poets. Barère does not appear to have been so lucky as to obtain any of these precious flowers; but one of his performances was mentioned with honour. At Montauban he was more fortunate. The academy of that town bestowed on him several prizes, one for a panegyric on Louis the Twelfth, in which the blessings of monarchy and the loyalty of the French nation were set forth; and another for a panegyric on poor Franc de Pompignan, in which, as may easily be supposed, the philosophy of the eighteenth century was sharply assailed. Then Barère found an old stone inscribed with three Latin words, and wrote a dissertation upon it, which procured him a seat in a learned Assembly, called the Toulouse Academy of Sciences, Inscriptions, and Polite Literature. At length the doors of the Academy of the Floral Games were opened to so much merit. Barère, in his thirty-third year, took his seat as one of that illustrious brotherhood, and made an inaugural oration which was greatly admired. He apologises for recounting these triumphs of his youthful genius. We own that we cannot blame him for dwelling long on the least disgraceful portion of his existence. To send in declamations for prizes offered by provincial academies is indeed no very useful or dignified employment for a bearded man; but it would have been well if Barère had always been so employed.

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* *Moniteur*, 31st of July 1793, and Nonidi, first Decade of Brumaire, in the year 2.

In 1785 he married a young lady of considerable fortune. Whether she was in other respects qualified to make a home happy, is a point respecting which we are imperfectly informed. In a little work, entitled *Melancholy Pages*, which was written in 1797, Barère avers that his marriage was one of mere convenience, that at the altar his heart was heavy with sorrowful forebodings, that he turned pale as he pronounced the solemn "Yes," that unbidden tears rolled down his cheeks, that his mother shared his presentiment, and that the evil omen was accomplished. "My marriage," he says, "was one of the most unhappy of marriages." So romantic a tale, told by so noted a liar, did not command our belief. We were, therefore, not much surprised to discover that, in his Memoirs, he calls his wife a most amiable woman, and declares that, after he had been united to her six years, he found her as amiable as ever. He complains, indeed, that she was too much attached to royalty and to the old superstition; but he assures us that his respect for her virtues induced him to tolerate her prejudices. Now Barère, at the time of his marriage, was himself a Royalist and a Catholic. He had gained one prize by flattering the Throne, and another by defending the Church. It is hardly possible, therefore, that disputes about politics or religion should have embittered his domestic life till some time after he became a husband. Our own guess is, that his wife was, as he says, a virtuous and amiable woman, and that she did her best to make him happy during some years. It seems clear that, when circumstances developed the latent atrocity of his character, she could no longer endure him, refused to see him, and sent back his letters unopened. Then it was, we imagine, that he invented the fable about his distress on his wedding day.

In 1788 Barère paid his first visit to Paris, attended reviews, heard Laharpe at the Lycæum, and Condorcet at the Academy of Sciences, stared at the envoys of Tippoo Sahib, saw the Royal Family dine at Versailles, and kept a journal in which he noted down adventures and speculations. Some parts of this journal are printed in the first volume of the work before us, and are certainly most characteristic. The worst vices of the writer had not yet shown themselves; but the weakness which was the parent of those vices appears in every line. His levity, his inconsistency, his servility, were already what they were to the last. All his opinions, all his feelings, spin round and round like a weathercock in a whirlwind. Nay, the very impressions which he receives through his senses are not the same two days together. He sees Louis the Sixteenth, and is so much blinded by loyalty as to find his Majesty handsome. "I fixed my eyes," he says, "with a lively curiosity on his fine countenance, which I thought open and noble." The next time that the king appears all is altered. His Majesty's eyes are without the smallest expression; he has a vulgar laugh which seems like idiocy, an ignoble figure, an awkward gait, and the look of a big boy ill brought up. It is the same with more important questions. Barère is for the parliaments on the Monday and against the parliaments on the Tuesday, for feudality in the morning and against feudality in the afternoon. One day he admires the English constitution; then he shudders to think that, in the struggles by which that constitution had been obtained, the barbarous islanders had murdered a king, and gives the preference to the constitution of Bearn. Bearn, he says, has a sublime constitution, a beautiful constitution. There the nobility and clergy meet in one house, and the Commons in another. If the houses differ, the King has the casting vote. A few weeks later we find him raving against the principles of this sublime and beautiful constitution. To admit deputies of the nobility and clergy into the legislature is, he says, neither more nor less than to admit enemies of the nation into the legislature.

In this state of mind, without one settled purpose or opinion, the slave of the last word, royalist, aristocrat, democrat, according to the prevailing sentiment of the coffee-house or drawing-room into which he had just looked, did Barère enter into public life. The States-General had been summoned. Barère went down to his own province, was there elected one of the representatives of the Third Estate, and returned to Paris in May 1789.

A great crisis, often predicted, had at last arrived. In no country, we conceive, have intellectual freedom and political servitude existed together so long as in France, during the seventy or eighty years which preceded the last convocation of the Orders. Ancient abuses and new theories flourished in equal vigour side by side. The people, having no constitutional means of checking even the most flagitious misgovernment, were indemnified for oppression by being suffered to luxuriate in anarchical speculation, and to deny or ridicule every principle on which the institutions of the State reposed. Neither those who attribute the downfall of the old French institutions to the public grievances, nor those who attribute it to the doctrines of the philosophers, appear to us to have taken into their view more than one half of the subject. Grievances as heavy have often been endured without producing a revolution; doctrines as bold have often been propounded without producing a revolution. The question, whether the French nation was alienated from its old polity by the follies and vices of the Viziers and Sultanas who pillaged and disgraced it, or by the writings of Voltaire and Rousseau, seems to us as idle as the question whether it was fire or gunpowder that blew up the mills at Hounslow. Neither cause would have sufficed alone. Tyranny may last through ages where discussion is suppressed. Discussion may safely be left free by rulers who act on popular principles. But combine a press like that of London with a government like that of St Petersburg; and the inevitable effect will be an explosion that will shake the world. So it was in France. Despotism and License, mingling in unblessed union, engendered that mighty Revolution in which the lineaments of both parents were strangely blended. The long gestation was accomplished; and Europe saw, with mixed hope and terror, that agonising travail and that portentous birth.

Among the crowd of legislators which at this conjuncture poured from all the provinces of France into Paris, Barère made no contemptible figure. The opinions which he for the moment professed were popular, yet not extreme. His character was fair; his personal advantages are said to have been considerable; and, from the portrait which is prefixed to these Memoirs, and which represents him as he appeared in the Convention, we should judge that his features must have been strikingly handsome, though we think that we can read in them cowardice and meanness very legibly written by the hand of God. His conversation was lively and easy; his manners remarkably good for a country lawyer. Women of rank and wit said that he was the only man who, on his first arrival from a remote province, had that indescribable air which it was supposed that Paris alone could give. His eloquence, indeed, was by no means so much admired in the capital as it had been by the ingenious academicians of Montauban and Toulouse. His style was thought very bad; and very bad, if a foreigner may venture to judge, it continued to the last. It would, however, be unjust to deny that he had some talents for speaking and writing. His rhetoric, though deformed by every imaginable fault of taste, from bombast down to buffoonery, was not wholly without force and vivacity. He had also one quality which, in active life, often gives fourth-rate men an advantage over first-rate men. Whatever he could do, he could do without effort, at any moment, in any abundance, and on any side of any question. There was, indeed, a perfect harmony between his moral character and his intellectual character. His temper was that of a slave; his abilities were exactly those which qualified him to be a useful slave. Of thinking to purpose, he was utterly incapable; but he had wonderful readiness in arranging and expressing thoughts furnished by others.

In the National Assembly he had no opportunity of displaying the full extent either of his talents or of his vices. He was indeed eclipsed by much abler men. He went, as was his habit, with the stream, spoke occasionally with some success, and edited a journal called the *Point du Jour*, in which the debates of the Assembly were reported.

He at first ranked by no means among the violent reformers. He was not friendly to that new division of the French territory which was among the most important changes introduced by the Revolution, and was especially unwilling to see his native province dismembered. He was entrusted with the task of framing Reports on the Woods and Forests. Louis was exceedingly anxious about this matter; for his majesty was a keen sportsman, and would much rather have gone without the Veto, or the prerogative of making peace and war, than without his hunting and shooting. Gentlemen of the royal household were sent to Barère, in order to intercede for the deer and pheasants. Nor was this intercession unsuccessful. The reports were so drawn that Barère was afterwards accused of having dishonestly sacrificed the interests of the public to the tastes of the court. To one of these reports he had the inconceivable folly and bad taste to prefix a punning motto from Virgil, fit only for such essays as he had been in the habit of composing for the Floral Games—

"Si canimus sylvas, sylvæ sint Consule dignæ."

This literary foppery was one of the few things in which he was consistent. Royalist or Girondist, Jacobin or Imperialist, he was always a Trissotin.

As the monarchical party became weaker and weaker, Barère gradually estranged himself more and more from it, and drew closer and closer to the republicans. It would seem that, during this transition, he was for a time closely connected with the family of Orleans. It is certain that he was entrusted with the guardianship of the celebrated Pamela, afterwards Lady Edward Fitzgerald; and it was asserted that he received during some years a pension of twelve thousand francs from the Palais Royal.

At the end of September 1791, the labours of the National Assembly terminated, and those of the first and last Legislative Assembly commenced.

It had been enacted that no member of the National Assembly should sit in the Legislative Assembly; a preposterous and mischievous regulation, to which the disasters which followed must in part be ascribed. In England, what would be thought of a Parliament which did not contain one single person who had ever sat in parliament before? Yet it may safely be affirmed that the number of Englishmen who, never having taken any share in public affairs, are yet well qualified, by knowledge and observation, to be members of the legislature is at least a hundred times as great as the number of Frenchmen who were so qualified in 1791. How, indeed, should it have been otherwise? In England, centuries of representative government have made all educated people in some measure statesmen. In France the National Assembly had probably been composed of as good materials as were then to be found. It had undoubtedly removed a vast mass of abuses; some of its members had read and thought much about theories of government; and others had shown great oratorical talents. But that kind of skill which is required for the constructing, launching, and steering of a polity was lamentably wanting; for it is a kind of skill to which practice contributes more than books. Books are indeed useful to the politician, as they are useful to the navigator and to the surgeon. But the real navigator is formed on the waves; the real surgeon is formed at bedsides; and the conflicts of free states are the real school of constitutional statesmen. The National Assembly had, however, now served an apprenticeship of two laborious and eventful years. It had, indeed, by no means finished its education; but it was no longer, as on the day when it met, altogether rude to political functions. Its later proceedings contain abundant proof that the members had profited by their experience. Beyond all doubt there was not in France any equal number of persons possessing in an equal degree the qualities necessary for the judicious direction of public affairs; and, just at this moment, these legislators, misled by a childish wish to display their own disinterestedness, deserted the duties which they had half learned, and which nobody else had learned at all, and left their hall to a second crowd of novices, who had still to master the first rudiments of political business. When Barère wrote his Memoirs, the absurdity of this self-denying ordinance had been proved by events, and was, we believe, acknowledged by all parties. He accordingly, with his usual mendacity, speaks of it in terms implying that he had opposed it. There was, he tells us, no good citizen who did not regret this fatal vote. Nay, all wise men, he says, wished the National Assembly to continue its sittings as the first Legislative Assembly. But no attention was paid to the wishes of the enlightened friends of liberty; and the generous but fatal suicide was perpetrated. Now the fact is, that Barère, far from opposing this ill-advised measure, was one of those who most eagerly supported it; that he described it from the tribune as wise and magnanimous; that he assigned, as his reasons for taking this view, some of those phrases in which orators of his class delight, and which, on all men who have the smallest insight into politics, produce an effect very similar to that of ipecacuanha. "Those," he said, "who have framed a constitution for their country are, so to speak, out of the pale of that social state of which they are the authors; for creative power is not in the same sphere with that which it has created."

M. Hippolyte Carnot has noticed this untruth, and attributes it to mere forgetfulness. We leave it to him to reconcile his very charitable supposition with what he elsewhere says of the remarkable excellence of Barère's memory.

Many members of the National Assembly were indemnified for the sacrifice of legislative power by appointments in various departments of the public service. Of these fortunate persons Barère was one. A high Court of Appeal had just been instituted. This court was to sit at Paris: but its jurisdiction was to extend over the whole realm; and the departments were to choose the judges. Barère was nominated by the department of the Upper Pyrenees, and took his seat in the Palace of Justice. He asserts, and our readers may, if they choose, believe, that it was about this time in contemplation to make him Minister of the Interior, and that in order to avoid so grave a responsibility, he obtained permission to pay a visit to his native place. It is certain that he left Paris early in the year 1792, and passed some months in the south of France.

In the mean time, it became clear that the constitution of 1791 would not work. It was, indeed, not to be expected that a constitution new both in its principles and its details would at first work easily. Had the chief magistrate enjoyed the entire confidence of the people, had he performed his part with the utmost zeal, fidelity, and ability—had the representative body included all the wisest statesmen of France, the difficulties might still have been found insuperable. But, in fact, the experiment was made under every disadvantage. The King, very naturally, hated the constitution. In the Legislative Assembly were men of genius and men of good intentions, but not a single man of experience. Nevertheless, if France had been suffered to settle her own affairs without foreign interference, it is possible that the calamities which followed might have been averted. The King, who, with many good qualities, was sluggish and sensual, might have found compensation for his lost prerogatives in his immense civil list, in his palaces and hunting grounds, in soups, Perigord pies, and champagne. The people, finding themselves secure in the enjoyment of the valuable reforms which the National Assembly had, in the midst of all its errors, effected, would not have been easily excited by demagogues to acts of atrocity; or, if acts of atrocity had been committed, those acts would probably have produced a speedy and violent reaction. Had tolerable quiet been preserved during a few years, the constitution of 1791 might perhaps have taken root, might have gradually acquired the strength which time alone can give, and might, with some modifications which were undoubtedly needed, have lasted down to the present time. The European coalition against the Revolution extinguished all hope of such a result. The deposition of Louis was, in our opinion, the necessary consequence of that coalition. The question was now no longer, whether the King should have an absolute Veto or a suspensive Veto, whether there should be one chamber or two chambers, whether the members of the representative body should be re-eligible or not; but whether France should belong to the French. The independence of the nation, the integrity of the territory, were at stake; and we must say plainly that we cordially approve of the conduct of those Frenchmen who, at that conjuncture, resolved, like our own Blake, to play the men for their country, under whatever form of government their country might fall.

It seems to us clear that the war with the Continental coalition was, on the side of France, at first a defensive war, and therefore a just war. It was not a war for small objects, or against despicable enemies. On the event were staked all the dearest interests of the French people. Foremost among the threatening powers appeared two great and martial monarchies, either of which, situated as France then was, might be regarded as a formidable assailant. It is evident that, under such circumstances, the French could not, without extreme imprudence, entrust the supreme administration of their affairs to any person whose attachment to the national cause admitted of doubt. Now, it is no reproach to the memory of Louis to say that he was not attached to the national cause. Had he been so, he would have been something more than man. He had held absolute power, not by usurpation, but by the accident of birth, and by the ancient polity of the kingdom. That power he had, on the whole, used with lenity. He had meant well by his people. He had been willing to make to them, of his own mere motion, concessions such as scarcely any other sovereign has ever made except under duress. He had paid the penalty of faults not his own, of the haughtiness and ambition of some of his predecessors, of the dissoluteness and baseness of others. He had been vanquished, taken captive, led in triumph, put in ward. He had escaped; he had been caught; he had been dragged back like a runaway galley-slave to the oar. He was still a state prisoner. His quiet was broken by daily affronts and lampoons. Accustomed from the cradle to be treated with profound reverence, he was now forced to command his feelings, while men who, a few months before, had been hackney writers or country attorneys, sat in his presence with covered heads, and addressed him in the easy tone of equality. Conscious of fair intentions, sensible of hard usage, he doubtless detested the Revolution; and, while charged with the conduct of the war against the confederates, pined in secret for the sight of the German eagles and the sound of the German drums. We do not blame him for this. But can we blame those who, being resolved to defend the work of the National Assembly against the interference of strangers, were not disposed to have him at their head in the fearful struggle which was approaching? We have nothing to say in defence or extenuation of the insolence, injustice, and cruelty with which, after the victory of the republicans, he and his family were treated. But this we say, that the French had only one alternative, to deprive him of the powers of first magistrate, or to ground their arms and submit patiently to foreign dictation. The events of the tenth of August sprang inevitably from the league of Pilnitz. The King's palace was stormed; his guards were slaughtered. He was suspended from his regal functions; and the Legislative Assembly invited the nation to elect an extraordinary Convention, with the full powers which the conjuncture required. To this Convention the members of the National Assembly were eligible; and Barère was chosen by his own department.

The Convention met on the 21st of September 1792. The first proceedings were unanimous. Royalty was abolished by acclamation. No objections were made to this great change; and no reasons were assigned for it. For certainly we cannot honour with the name of reasons such apophthegms, as that kings are in the moral world what monsters are in the physical world; and that the history of kings is the martyrology of nations. But, though the discussion was worthy only of a debating club of schoolboys, the resolution to which the Convention came seems to have been that which sound policy dictated. In saying this, we do not mean to express an opinion that a republic is, either in the abstract the best form of government, or is, under ordinary circumstances, the form of government best suited to the French people. Our own opinion is, that the best governments which have ever existed in the world have been limited monarchies; and that France, in particular, has never enjoyed so much prosperity and freedom as under a limited monarchy. Nevertheless, we approve of the vote of the Convention which abolished kingly government. The interference of foreign powers had brought on a crisis which made extraordinary measures necessary. Hereditary monarchy may be, and we believe that it is, a very useful institution in a country like France. And masts are very useful parts of a ship. But, if the ship is on her beam-ends, it may be necessary to cut the masts away. When once she has righted, she may come safe into port under jury rigging, and there be completely repaired. But, in the meantime, she must be hacked with unsparing hand, lest that which, under ordinary circumstances, is an essential part of her fabric should, in her extreme distress, sink her to the bottom. Even so there are political emergencies in which it is necessary that governments should be mutilated of their fair proportions for a time, lest they be cast away for ever; and with such an emergency the Convention had to deal. The first object of a good Frenchman should have been to save France from the fate of Poland. The first requisite of a government was entire devotion to the national cause. That requisite was wanting in Louis; and such a want, at such a moment, could not be supplied by any public or private virtues. If the king were set aside, the abolition of kingship necessarily followed. In the state in which the public mind then was, it would have been idle to think of doing what our ancestors did in 1688, and what the French Chamber of Deputies did in 1830. Such an attempt would have failed amidst universal derision and execration. It would have disgusted all zealous men of all opinions; and there were then few men who were not zealous. Parties fatigued by long conflict, and instructed by the severe discipline of that school in which alone mankind will learn, are disposed to listen to the voice of a mediator. But when they are in their first heady youth, devoid of experience, fresh for exertion, flushed with hope, burning with animosity, they agree only in spurning out of their way the daysman who strives to take his stand between them and to lay his hand upon them both. Such was in 1792 the state of France. On one side was the great name of the heir of Hugh Capet, the thirty-third king of the third race; on the other side was the great name of the republic. There was no rallying point save these two. It was necessary to make a choice; and those, in our opinion, judged well who, waving for the moment all subordinate questions, preferred independence to subjugation, and the natal soil to the emigrant camp.

As to the abolition of royalty, and as to the vigorous prosecution of the war, the whole Convention seemed to be united as one man. But a deep and broad gulf separated the representative body into two great parties.

On one side were those statesmen who are called, from the name of the department which some of them represented, the Girondists, and, from the name of one of their most conspicuous leaders, the Brissotines. In activity and practical ability, Brissot and Gensonné were the most conspicuous among them. In parliamentary eloquence, no Frenchman of that time can be considered as equal to Vergniaud. In a foreign country, and after the lapse of half a century, some parts of his speeches are still read with mournful admiration. No man, we are inclined to believe, ever rose so rapidly to such a height of oratorical excellence. His whole public life lasted barely two years. This is a circumstance which distinguishes him from our own greatest speakers, Fox, Burke, Pitt, Sheridan, Windham, Canning. Which of these celebrated men would now be remembered as an orator, if he had died two years after he first took his seat in the House of Commons? Condorcet brought to the Girondist party a different kind of strength. The public regarded him with justice as an eminent mathematician, and, with less reason, as a great master of ethical and political science; the philosophers considered him as their chief, as the rightful heir, by intellectual descent and by solemn adoption, of their deceased sovereign D'Alembert. In the same ranks were found Guadet, Isnard, Barbaroux, Buzot, Louvet, too well known as the author of a very ingenious and very licentious romance, and more honourably distinguished by the generosity with which he pleaded for the unfortunate, and by the intrepidity with which he defied the wicked and powerful. Two persons whose talents were not brilliant, but who enjoyed a high reputation for probity and public spirit, Pétion and Roland, lent the whole weight of their names to the Girondist connection. The wife of Roland brought to the deliberations of her husband's friends masculine courage and force of thought, tempered by womanly grace and vivacity. Nor was the splendour of a great military reputation wanting to this celebrated party. Dumourier, then victorious over the foreign invaders, and at the height of popular favour, must be reckoned among the allies of the Gironde.

The errors of the Brissotines were undoubtedly neither few nor small; but, when we fairly compare their conduct with the conduct of any other party which acted or suffered during the French Revolution, we are forced to admit their superiority in every quality except that single quality which in such times prevails over every other, decision. They were zealous for the great social reform which had been effected by the National Assembly; and they were right. For, though that reform was, in some respects, carried too far, it was a blessing well worth even the fearful price which has been paid for it. They were resolved to maintain the independence of their country against foreign invaders; and they were right. For the heaviest of all yokes is the yoke of the stranger. They thought that, if Louis remained at their head, they could not carry on with the requisite energy the conflict against the European coalition. They therefore concurred in establishing a republican government; and here, again, they were right. For, in that struggle for life and death, it would have been madness to trust a hostile or even a half hearted leader.

Thus far they went along with the revolutionary movement. At this point they stopped; and, in our judgment, they were right in stopping, as they had been right in moving. For great ends, and under extraordinary circumstances, they had concurred in measures which, together with much good, had necessarily produced much evil; which had unsettled the public mind; which had taken away from government the sanction of prescription; which had loosened the very foundations of property and law. They thought that it was now their duty to prop what it had recently been their duty to batter. They loved liberty, but liberty associated with order, with justice, with mercy, and with civilisation. They were republicans; but they were desirous to adorn their republic with all that had given grace and dignity to the fallen monarchy. They hoped that the humanity, the courtesy, the taste, which had done much in old times to mitigate the slavery of France, would now lend additional charms to her freedom. They saw with horror crimes exceeding in atrocity those which had disgraced the infuriated religious factions of the sixteenth century, perpetrated in the name of reason and philanthropy. They demanded, with eloquent vehemence, that the authors of the lawless massacre, which, just before the meeting of the Convention, had been committed in the prisons of Paris, should be brought to condign punishment. They treated with just contempt the pleas which have been set up for that great crime. They admitted that the public danger was pressing; but they denied that it justified a violation of those principles of morality on which all society rests. The independence and honour of France were indeed to be vindicated, but to be vindicated by triumphs and not by murders.

Opposed to the Girondists was a party which, having been long execrated throughout the civilised world, has of late—such is the ebb and flow of opinion—found not only apologists, but even eulogists. We are not disposed to deny that some members of the Mountain were sincere and public spirited men. But even the best of them, Carnot, for example, and Cambon, were far too unscrupulous as to the means which they employed for the purpose of attaining great ends. In the train of these enthusiasts followed a crowd, composed of all who, from sensual, sordid, or malignant motives, wished for a period of boundless license.

When the Convention met, the majority was with the Girondists, and Barère was with the majority. On the King's trial, indeed, he quitted the party with which he ordinarily acted, voted with the Mountain, and spoke against the prisoner with a violence such as few members even of the Mountain showed.

The conduct of the leading Girondists on that occasion was little to their honour. Of cruelty, indeed, we fully acquit them; but it is impossible to acquit them of criminal irresolution and disingenuousness. They were far, indeed, from thirsting for the blood of Louis: on the contrary, they were most desirous to protect him. But they were afraid that, if they went straight forward to their object, the sincerity of their attachment to republican institutions would be suspected. They wished to save the King's life, and yet to obtain all the credit of having been regicides. Accordingly, they traced out for themselves a crooked course, by which they hoped to attain both their objects. They first voted the King guilty. They then voted for referring the question respecting his fate to the whole body of the people. Defeated in this attempt to rescue him, they reluctantly, and with ill-suppressed shame and concern, voted for the capital sentence. Then they made a last attempt in his favour, and voted for respiting the execution. These zigzag politics produced the effect which any man conversant with public affairs might have foreseen. The Girondists, instead of attaining both their ends, failed of both. The Mountain justly charged them with having attempted to save the King by underhand means. Their own consciences told them, with equal justice, that their hands had been dipped in the blood of the most inoffensive and most unfortunate of men. The direct path was here, as usual, the path not only of honour, but of safety. The principle on which the Girondists stood as a party was, that the season for revolutionary violence was over, and that the reign of law and order ought now to commence. But the proceeding against the King was clearly revolutionary in its nature. It was not in conformity with the laws. The only plea for it was, that all ordinary rules of jurisprudence and morality were suspended by the extreme public danger. This was the very plea which the

Mountain urged in defence of the massacre of September, and to which, when so urged, the Girondists refused to listen. They therefore, by voting for the death of the King, conceded to the Mountain the chief point at issue between the two parties. Had they given a manful vote against the capital sentence, the regicides would have been in a minority. It is probable that there would have been an immediate appeal to force. The Girondists might have been victorious. In the worst event, they would have fallen with unblemished honour. Thus much is certain, that their boldness and honesty could not possibly have produced a worse effect than was actually produced by their timidity and their stratagems.

Barère, as we have said, sided with the Mountain on this occasion. He voted against the appeal to the people and against the respite. His demeanour and his language also were widely different from those of the Girondists. Their hearts were heavy, and their deportment was that of men oppressed by sorrow. It was Vergniaud's duty to proclaim the result of the roll-call. His face was pale, and he trembled with emotion, as in a low and broken voice he announced that Louis was condemned to death. Barère had not, it is true, yet attained to full perfection in the art of mingling jests and conceits with words of death; but he already gave promise of his future excellence in this high department of Jacobin oratory. He concluded his speech with a sentence worthy of his head and heart. "The tree of liberty," he said, "as an ancient author remarks, flourishes when it is watered with the blood of all classes of tyrants." M. Hippolyte Carnot has quoted this passage in order, as we suppose, to do honour to his hero. We wish that a note had been added to inform us from what ancient author Barère quoted. In the course of our own small reading among the Greek and Latin writers, we have not happened to fall in with trees of liberty and watering-pots full of blood; nor can we, such is our ignorance of classical antiquity, even imagine an Attic or Roman orator employing imagery of that sort. In plain words, when Barère talked about an ancient author, he was lying, as he generally was when he asserted any fact, great or small. Why he lied on this occasion we cannot guess, unless indeed it was to keep his hand in.

It is not improbable that, but for the one circumstance, Barère would, like most of those with whom he ordinarily acted, have voted for the appeal to the people and for the respite. But, just before the commencement of the trial, papers had been discovered which proved that, while a member of the National Assembly, he had been in communication with the Court respecting his Reports on the Woods and Forests. He was acquitted of all criminality by the Convention; but the fiercer Republicans considered him as a tool of the fallen monarch; and this reproach was long repeated in the journal of Marat, and in the speeches at the Jacobin club. It was natural that a man like Barère should, under such circumstances, try to distinguish himself among the crowd of regicides by peculiar ferocity. It was because he had been a royalist that he was one of the foremost in shedding blood.

The King was no more. The leading Girondists had, by their conduct towards him, lowered their character in the eyes both of friends and foes. They still, however, maintained the contest against the Mountain, called for vengeance on the assassins of September, and protested against the anarchical and sanguinary doctrines of Marat. For a time they seemed likely to prevail. As publicists and orators, they had no rivals in the Convention. They had with them, beyond all doubt, the great majority both of the deputies and of the French nation. These advantages, it should seem, ought to have decided the event of the struggle. But the opposite party had compensating advantages of a different kind. The chiefs of the Mountain, though not eminently distinguished by eloquence or knowledge, had great audacity, activity, and determination. The Convention and France were against them ; but the mob of Paris, the clubs of Paris, and the municipal government of Paris, were on their side.

The policy of the Jacobins, in this situation, was to subject France to an aristocracy infinitely worse than that aristocracy which had emigrated with the Count of Artois—to an aristocracy not of birth, not of wealth, not of education, but of mere locality. They would not hear of privileged orders ; but they wished to have a privileged city. That twenty-five millions of Frenchmen should be ruled by a hundred thousand gentlemen and clergymen was insufferable ; but that twenty-five millions of Frenchmen should be ruled by a hundred thousand Parisians was as it should be. The qualification of a member of the new oligarchy was simply that he should live near the hall where the Convention met, and should be able to squeeze himself daily into the gallery during a debate, and now and then to attend with a pike for the purpose of blockading the doors. It was quite agreeable to the maxims of the Mountain that a score of draymen from Santerre's brewery, or of devils from Hébert's printing-house, should be permitted to drown the voices of men commissioned to speak the sense of such cities as Marseilles, Bordeaux, and Lyons ; and that a rabble of half-naked porters from the Faubourg St Antoine should have power to annul decrees for which the representatives of fifty or sixty departments had voted. It was necessary to find some pretext for so odious and absurd a tyranny. Such a pretext was found. To the old phrases of liberty and equality were added the sonorous watchwords, unity and indivisability. A new crime was invented, and called by the name of federalism. The object of the Girondists, it was asserted, was to break up the great nation into little independent commonwealths, bound together only by a league like that which connects the Swiss Cantons or the United States of America. The great obstacle in the way of this pernicious design was the influence of Paris. To strengthen the influence of Paris ought therefore to be the chief object of every patriot.

The accusation brought against the leaders of the Girondist party was a mere calumny. They were undoubtedly desirous to prevent the capital from domineering over the republic, and would gladly have seen the Convention removed for a time to some provincial town, or placed under the protection of a trusty guard, which might have overawed the Parisian mob ; but there is not the slightest reason to suspect them of any design against the unity of the state. Barère, however, really was a federalist, and, we are inclined to believe, the only federalist in the Convention. As far as a man so unstable and servile can be said to have felt any preference for any form of government, he felt a preference for federal government. He was born under the Pyrenees ; he was a Gascon of the Gascons, one of a people strongly distinguished by intellectual and moral character, by manners, by modes of speech, by accent, and by physiognomy, from the French of the Seine and of the Loire ; and he had many of the peculiarities of the race to which he belonged. When he first left his own province he had attained his thirty-fourth year, and had acquired a high local reputation for eloquence and literature. He had then visited Paris for the first time. He had found himself in a new world. His feelings were those of a banished man. It is clear also that he had been by no means without his share of the small disappointments and humiliations so often experienced by men of letters who, elated by provincial applause, venture to display their powers before the fastidious critics of a capital. On the other hand, whenever he revisited the mountains among which he had been born, he found himself an object of general admiration. His dislike of Paris, and his partiality to his native district, were therefore as strong and durable as any sentiments of a mind like his could be. He long continued to maintain that the ascendency of one great city was the bane of France; that the superiority of taste and intelligence which it was the fashion to ascribe to the inhabitants of that city were wholly imaginary; and that the nation would never enjoy a really good government till the Alsatian people, the Breton people, the people of Bearn, the people of Provence, should have each an independent existence, and laws suited to its own tastes and habits. These communities he proposed to unite by a tie similar to that which binds together the grave Puritans of Connecticut and the dissolute slave-drivers of New Orleans. To Paris he was unwilling to grant even the rank which Washington holds in the United States. He thought it desirable that the congress of the French federation should have no fixed place of meeting, but should sit sometimes at Rouen, sometimes at Bordeaux, sometimes at his own Toulouse.

Animated by such feelings, he was, till the close of May 1793, a Girondist, if not an ultra-Girondist. He exclaimed against those impure and bloodthirsty men who wished to make the public danger a pretext for cruelty and rapine. "Peril," he said, "could be no excuse for crime. It is when the wind blows hard, and the waves run high, that the anchor is most needed; it is when a revolution is raging, that the great laws of morality are most necessary to the safety of a state." Of Marat he spoke with abhorrence and contempt; of the municipal authorities of Paris with just severity. He loudly complained that there were Frenchmen who paid to the Mountain that homage which was due to the Convention alone. When the establishment of the Revolutionary Tribunal was first proposed, he joined himself to Vergniaud and Buzot, who strongly objected to that odious measure. "It cannot be," exclaimed Barère, "that men really attached to liberty will imitate the most frightful excesses of despotism!" He proved to the Convention, after his fashion, out of Sallust, that such arbitrary courts may indeed, for a time, be severe only on real criminals, but must inevitably degenerate into instruments of private cupidity and revenge. When, on the tenth of March, the worst part of the population of Paris made the first unsuccessful attempt to destroy the Girondists, Barère eagerly called for vigorous measures of repression and punishment. On the second of April, another attempt of the Jacobins of Paris to usurp supreme dominion over the republic was brought to the knowledge of the Convention; and again Barère spoke with warmth against the new tyranny which afflicted France, and declared that the people of the departments would never crouch beneath the tyranny of one ambitious city. He even proposed a resolution to the effect that the Convention would exert against the demagogues of the capital the same energy which had been exerted against the tyrant Louis. We are assured that, in private as in public, he at this time uniformly spoke with strong aversion of the Mountain.

His apparent zeal for the cause of humanity and order had its reward. Early in April came the tidings of Dumourier's defection. This was a heavy blow to the Girondists. Dumourier was their general. His victories had thrown a lustre on the whole party; his army, it had been hoped, would, in the worst event, protect the deputies of the nation against the ragged pikemen of the garrets of Paris. He was now a deserter and an exile; and those who had lately placed their chief reliance on his support were compelled to join with their deadliest enemies in execrating his treason. At this perilous conjuncture, it was resolved to appoint a Committee of Public Safety, and to arm that committee with powers, small indeed when compared with those which it afterwards drew to itself, but still great and formidable. The moderate party, regarding Barère as a representative of their feelings and opinions, elected him a member. In his new situation he soon began to make himself useful. He brought to the deliberations of the Committee, not indeed the knowledge or the ability of a great statesman, but a tongue and a pen which, if others would only supply ideas, never paused for want of words. His mind was a mere organ of communication between other minds. It originated nothing; it retained nothing; but it transmitted everything. The post assigned to him by his colleagues was not really of the highest importance; but it was prominent, and drew the attention of all Europe. When a great measure was to be brought forward, when an account was to be rendered of an important event, he was generally the mouthpiece of the administration. He was therefore not unnaturally considered, by persons who lived at a distance from the seat of government, and above all by foreigners, who, while the war raged, knew France only from journals, as the head of that administration of which, in truth, he was only the secretary and the spokesman. The author of the History of Europe, in our own Annual Registers, appears to have been completely under this delusion.

The conflict between the hostile parties was meanwhile fast approaching to a crisis. The temper of Paris grew daily fiercer and fiercer. Delegates appointed by thirty-five of the forty-eight wards of the city appeared at the bar of the Convention, and demanded that Vergniaud, Brissot, Guadet, Gensonné, Barbaroux, Buzot, Pétion, Louvet, and many other deputies, should be expelled. This demand was disapproved by at least three-fourths of the Assembly, and, when known in the departments, called forth a general cry of indignation. Bordeaux declared that it would stand by its representatives, and would, if necessary, defend them by the sword against the tyranny of Paris. Lyons and Marseilles were animated by a similar spirit. These manifestations of public opinion gave courage to the majority of the Convention. Thanks were voted to the people of Bordeaux for their patriotic declaration; and a commission consisting of twelve members was appointed for the purpose of investigating the conduct of the municipal authorities of Paris, and was empowered to place under arrest such persons as should appear to have been concerned in any plot against the authority of the Convention. This measure was adopted on the motion of Barère.

A few days of stormy excitement and profound anxiety followed; and then came the crash. On the thirty-first of May the mob of Paris rose; the palace of the Tuileries was besieged by a vast array of pikes; the majority of the deputies, after vain struggles and remonstrances, yielded to violence, and suffered the Mountain to carry a decree for the suspension and arrest of the deputies whom the wards of the capital had accused.

During this contest, Barère had been tossed backwards and forwards between the two raging factions. His feelings, languid and unsteady as they always were, drew him to the Girondists; but he was awed by the vigour and determination of the Mountain. At one moment he held high and firm language, complained that the Convention was not free, and protested against the validity of any vote passed under coercion. At another moment he proposed to conciliate the Parisians by abolishing that commission of twelve which he had himself proposed only a few days before; and himself drew up a paper condemning the very measures which had been adopted at his own instance, and eulogising the public spirit of the insurgents. To do him justice, it was not without some symptoms of shame that he read this document from the tribune, where he had so often expressed very different sentiments. It is said that, at some passages, he was even seen to blush. It may have been so; he was still in his novitiate of infamy.

Some days later he proposed that hostages for the personal safety of the accused deputies should be sent to the departments, and offered to be himself one of those hostages. Nor do we in the least doubt that the offer was sincere. He would, we firmly believe, have thought himself far safer at Bordeaux or Marseilles than at Paris. His proposition, however, was not carried into effect; and he remained in the power of the victorious Mountain.

This was the great crisis of his life. Hitherto he had done nothing inexpiable, nothing which marked him out as a much worse man than most of his colleagues in the Convention. His voice had generally been on the side of moderate measures. Had he bravely cast in his lot with the Girondists, and suffered with them, he would, like them, have had a not dishonourable place in history. Had he, like the great body of deputies who meant well, but who had not the courage to expose themselves to martyrdom, crouched quietly under the dominion of the triumphant minority, and suffered every motion of Robespierre and Billaud to pass unopposed, he would have incurred no peculiar ignominy. But it is probable that this course was not open to him. He had been too prominent among the adversaries of the Mountain to be admitted to quarter without making some atonement. It was necessary that, if he hoped to find pardon from his new lords, he should not be merely a silent and passive slave. What passed in private between him and them cannot be accurately related; but the result was soon apparent. The Committee of Public Safety was renewed. Several of the fiercest of the dominant faction, Couthon for example, and Saint Just, were substituted for more moderate politicians; but Barère was suffered to retain his seat at the Board.

The indulgence with which he was treated excited the murmurs of some stern and ardent zealots. Marat, in the very last words that he wrote, words not published till the dagger of Charlotte Corday had avenged France and mankind, complained that a man who had no principles, who was always on the side of the strongest, who had been a royalist, and who was ready, in case of a turn of fortune, to be a royalist again, should be entrusted with an important share in the administration.* But the chiefs of the Mountain judged more correctly. They knew, indeed, as well as Marat, that Barère was a man utterly without faith or steadiness; that, if he could be said to have any political leaning, his leaning was not towards them; that he felt for the Girondist party that faint and wavering sort of preference of which alone his nature was susceptible; and that, if he had been at liberty to make his choice, he would rather have murdered Robespierre and Danton than Vergniaud and Gensonné. But they justly appreciated that levity which made him incapable alike of earnest love and of earnest hatred, and that meanness which made it necessary to him to have a master. In truth, what the planters of Carolina and Louisiana say of black men with flat noses and woolly hair was strictly true of Barère. The curse of Canaan was upon him. He was born a slave. Baseness was an instinct in him. The impulse which drove him from a party in adversity to a party in prosperity was as irresistible as that which drives the cuckoo and the swallow towards the sun when the dark and cold months are approaching. The law which doomed him to be the humble attendant of stronger spirits resembled the law which binds the pilot fish to the shark. "Ken ye," said a shrewd Scotch lord, who was asked his opinion of James the First—"Ken ye a John Ape? If I have Jacko by the collar, I can make him bite you; but, if you have Jacko, you can make him bite me." Just such a creature was Barère. In the hands of the Girondists he would have been eager to proscribe the Jacobins; he was just as ready, in the gripe of the Jacobins, to proscribe the Girondists. On the fidelity of such a man the heads of the Mountain could not, of course, reckon; but they valued their conquest as the very easy and not very delicate lover in Congreve's lively song valued the conquest of a prostitute of a different kind. Barère was, like Chloe, false and common; but he was, like Chloe, constant while possessed; and they asked no more. They needed a service which he was perfectly competent to perform. Destitute as he was of all the talents both of an active and of a speculative statesman, he could with great facility draw up a report, or make a speech on any subject and on any side. If other people would furnish facts and thoughts, he could always furnish phrases; and this talent was absolutely at the command of his owners for the time being. Nor had he excited any angry passion among those to whom he had hitherto been opposed. They felt no more hatred to him than they felt to the horses which dragged the cannon of the Duke of Brunswick and of the Prince of Saxe-Coburg. The horses had only done according to their kind, and would, if they fell into the hands of the French, drag with equal vigour and equal docility the guns of the republic, and therefore ought not merely to be spared, but to be well fed and curried. So was it with Barère. He was of a nature so low, that it might be doubted whether he could properly be an object of the hostility of reasonable beings. He had not been an enemy; he was not now a friend. But he had been an annoyance; and he would now be a help.

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* See the *Publiciste* of the 14th July, 1793. Marat was stabbed on the evening of the 13th.

But, though the heads of the Mountain pardoned this man, and admitted him into partnership with themselves, it was not without exacting pledges such as made it impossible for him, false and fickle as he was, ever again to find admission into the ranks which he had deserted. That was truly a terrible sacrament by which they admitted the apostate into their communion. They demanded of him that he should himself take the most prominent part in murdering his old friends. To refuse was as much as his life was worth. But what is life worth when it is only one long agony of remorse and shame? These, however, are feelings of which it is idle to talk, when we are considering the conduct of such a man as Barère. He undertook the task, mounted the tribune, and told the Convention that the time was come for taking the stern attitude of justice, and for striking at all conspirators without distinction. He then moved that Buzot, Barbaroux, Pétion, and thirteen other deputies, should be placed out of the pale of the law, or, in other words, beheaded without a trial; and that Vergniaud, Guadet, Gensonné, and six others, should be impeached. The motion was carried without debate.

We have already seen with what effrontery Barère has denied, in these Memoirs, that he took any part against the Girondists. This denial, we think, was the only thing wanting to make his infamy complete. The most impudent of all lies was a fit companion for the foulest of all murders.

Barère, however, had not yet earned his pardon. The Jacobin party contained one gang which, even in that party, was pre-eminent in every mean and every savage vice; a gang so low-minded and so inhuman that, compared with them, Robespierre might be called magnanimous and merciful. Of these wretches Hébert was perhaps the best representative. His favourite amusement was to torment and insult the miserable remains of that great family which, having ruled France during eight hundred years, had now become an object of pity to the humblest artisan or peasant. The influence of this man, and of men like him, induced the Committee of Public Safety to determine that Marie Antoinette should be sent to the scaffold. Barère was again summoned to his duty. Only four days after he had proposed the decrees against the Girondist deputies he again mounted the tribune, in order to move that the Queen should be brought before the Revolutionary Tribunal. He was improving fast in the society of his new allies. When he asked for the heads of Vergniaud and Pétion he had spoken like a man who had some slight sense of his own guilt and degradation: he had said little; and that little had not been violent. The office of expatiating on the guilt of his old friends he had left to Saint Just. Very different was Barère's second appearance in the character of an accuser. He now cried out for blood in the eager tones of the true and burning thirst, and raved against the Austrian woman with the virulence natural to a coward who finds himself at liberty to outrage that which he has feared and envied. We have already exposed the shameless mendacity with which, in these Memoirs, he attempts to throw the blame of his own guilt on the guiltless.

On the day on which the fallen Queen was dragged, already more than half dead, to her doom, Barère regaled Robespierre and some other Jacobins at a tavern. Robespierre's acceptance of the invitation caused some surprise to those who knew how long and how bitterly it was his nature to hate. "Robespierre of the party!" muttered Saint Just. "Barère is the only man whom Robespierre has forgiven." We have an account of this singular repast from one of the guests. Robespierre condemned the senseless brutality with which Hébert had conducted the proceedings against the Austrian woman, and, in talking on that subject, became so much excited that he broke his plate in the violence of his gesticulation. Barère exclaimed that the guillotine had cut a diplomatic knot which it might have been difficult to untie. In the intervals between the Beaune and the Champagne, between the ragout of thrushes and the partridge with truffles, he fervently preached his new political creed. "The vessel of the revolution," he said, "can float into port only on waves of blood. We must begin with the members of the National Assembly and of the Legislative Assembly. That rubbish must be swept away."

As he talked at table he talked in the Convention. His peculiar style of oratory was now formed. It was not altogether without ingenuity and liveliness. But in any other age or country it would have been thought unfit for the deliberations of a grave assembly, and still more unfit for state papers. It might, perhaps, succeed at a meeting of a Protestant

Association in Exeter Hall, at a Repeal dinner in Ireland, after men had well drunk, or in an American oration on the fourth of July. No legislative body would now endure it. But in France, during the reign of the Convention, the old laws of composition were held in as much contempt as the old government or the old creed. Correct and noble diction belonged, like the etiquette of Versailles and the solemnities of Notre Dame, to an age which had passed away. Just as a swarm of ephemeral constitutions, democratic, directorial, and consular, sprang from the decay of the ancient monarchy; just as a swarm of new superstitions, the worship of the Goddess of Reason, and the fooleries of the Theo-philanthropists, sprang from the decay of the ancient Church; even so, out of the decay of the ancient French eloquence sprang new fashions of eloquence, for the understanding of which new grammars and dictionaries were necessary. The same innovating spirit which altered the common phrases of salutation, which turned hundreds of Johns and Peters into Scævolas and Aristogitons, and which expelled Sunday and Monday, January and February, Lady-day and Christmas, from the calendar, in order to substitute Decadi and Primidi, Nivose and Pluviose, Feasts of Opinion and Feasts of the Supreme Being, changed all the forms of official correspondence. For the calm, guarded, and sternly courteous language which governments had long been accustomed to employ, were substituted puns, interjections, Ossianic rants, rhetoric worthy only of a schoolboy, scurrility worthy only of a fishwife. Of the phraseology which was now thought to be peculiarly well suited to a report or a manifesto Barère had a greater command than any man of his time, and, during the short and sharp paroxysm of the revolutionary delirium, passed for a great orator. When the fit was over, he was considered as what he really was, a man of quick apprehension and fluent elocution, with no originality, with little information, and with a taste as bad as his heart. His Reports were popularly called Carmagnoles. A few months ago we should have had some difficulty in conveying to an English reader an exact notion of the state papers to which this appellation was given. Fortunately a noble and distinguished person, whom her Majesty's Ministers have thought qualified to fill the most important post in the empire, has made our task easy. Whoever has read Lord Ellenborough's proclamations is able to form a complete idea of a Carmagnole.

The effect which Barère's discourses at one time produced is not to be wholly attributed to the perversion of the national taste. The occasions on which he rose were frequently such as would have secured to the worst speaker a favourable hearing. When any military advantage had been gained, he was generally deputed by the Committee of Public Safety to announce the good news. The hall resounded with applause as he mounted the tribune, holding the despatches in his hand. Deputies and strangers listened with delight while he told them that victory was the order of the day; that the guineas of Pitt had been vainly lavished to hire machines six feet high, carrying guns; that the flight of the English leopard deserved to be celebrated by Tyrtæus; and that the saltpetre dug out of the cellars of Paris had been turned into thunder, which would crush the Titan brethren, George and Francis.

Meanwhile the trial of the accused Girondists, who were under arrest in Paris, came on. They flattered themselves with a vain hope of escape. They placed some reliance on their innocence, and some reliance on their eloquence. They thought that shame would suffice to restrain any man, however violent and cruel, from publicly committing the flagrant iniquity of condemning them to death. The Revolutionary Tribunal was new to its functions. No member of the Convention had yet been executed; and it was probable that the boldest Jacobin would shrink from being the first to violate the sanctity which was supposed to belong to the representatives of the people.

The proceedings lasted some days. Gensonné and Brissot defended themselves with great ability and presence of mind against the vile Hébert and Chaumette, who appeared as accusers. The eloquent voice of Vergniaud was heard for the last time. He pleaded his own cause and that of his friends, with such force of reason and elevation of sentiment that a murmur of pity and admiration rose from the audience. Nay, the court itself, not yet accustomed to riot in daily carnage, showed signs of emotion. The sitting was adjourned; and a rumour went forth that there would be an acquittal. The Jacobins met, breathing vengeance. Robespierre undertook to be their organ. He rose on the following day in the Convention, and proposed a decree of such atrocity that even among the acts of that year it can hardly be paralleled. By this decree the tribunal was empowered to cut short the defence of the prisoners, to pronounce the case clear, and to pass immediate judgment. One deputy made a faint opposition. Barère instantly sprang up to support Robespierre—Barère, the federalist; Barère, the author of that Commission of Twelve which was among the chief causes of the hatred borne by Paris to the Girondists; Barère, who in these Memoirs denies that he ever took any part against the Girondists; Barère, who has the effrontery to declare that he greatly loved and esteemed Vergniaud. The decree was passed; and the tribunal, without suffering the prisoners to conclude what they had to say, pronounced them guilty.

The following day was the saddest in the sad history of the Revolution. The sufferers were so innocent, so brave, so eloquent, so accomplished, so young. Some of them were graceful and handsome youths of six or seven and twenty. Vergniaud and Gensonné were little more than thirty. They had been only a few months engaged in public affairs. In a few months the fame of their genius had filled Europe; and they were to die for no crime but this, that they had wished to combine order, justice, and mercy with freedom. Their great fault was want of courage. We mean want of political courage—of that courage which is proof to clamour and obloquy, and which meets great emergencies by daring and decisive measures. Alas! they had but too good an opportunity of proving that they did not want courage to endure with manly cheerfulness the worst that could be inflicted by such tyrants as Saint Just, and such slaves as Barère.

They were not the only victims of the noble cause. Madame Roland followed them to the scaffold with a spirit as heroic as their own. Her husband was in a safe hiding-place, but could not bear to survive her. His body was found on the high road near Rouen. He had fallen on his sword. Condorcet swallowed opium. At Bordeaux the steel fell on the necks of the bold and quick-witted Guadet and of Barbaroux, the chief of those enthusiasts from the Rhone whose valour, in the great crisis of the tenth of August, had turned back the tide of battle from the Louvre to the Tuileries. In a field near the Garonne was found all that the wolves had left of Pétion, once honoured, greatly indeed beyond his deserts, as the model of republican virtue. We are far from regarding even the best of the Girondists with unmixed admiration; but history owes to them this honourable testimony, that, being free to choose whether they would be oppressors or victims, they deliberately and firmly resolved rather to suffer injustice than to inflict it.

And now began that strange period known by the name of the Reign of Terror. The Jacobins had prevailed. This was their hour, and the power of darkness. The Convention was subjugated and reduced to profound silence on the highest questions of state. The sovereignty passed to the Committee of Public Safety. To the edicts framed by that Committee the representative assembly did not venture to offer even the species of opposition which the ancient parliament had frequently offered to the mandates of the ancient kings. Six persons held the chief power in the small cabinet which now domineered over France--Robespierre, Saint Just, Couthon, Collot, Billaud, and Barère.

To some of these men, and of those who adhered to them, it is due to say that the fanaticism which had emancipated them from the restraints of justice and compassion had emancipated them also from the dominion of vulgar cupidity and of vulgar fear; that, while hardly knowing where to find an assignat of a few francs to pay for a dinner, they expended with strict integrity the immense revenue which they collected by every art of rapine; and that they were ready, in support of their cause, to mount the scaffold with as much indifference as they showed when they signed the death-warrants of aristocrats and priests. But no great party can be composed of such materials as these. It is the inevitable law that such zealots as we have described shall collect around them a multitude of slaves, of cowards, and of libertines, whose savage tempers and licentious appetites, withheld only by the dread of law and magistracy from the worst excesses, are called into full activity by the hope of immunity. A faction which, from whatever motive, relaxes the great laws of morality is certain to be joined by the most immoral part of the community. This has been repeatedly proved in religious wars. The war of the Holy Sepulchre, the Albigensian war, the Huguenot war, the Thirty Years' war, all originated in pious zeal. That zeal inflamed the champions of the Church to such a point that they regarded all generosity to the vanquished as a sinful weakness. The infidel, the heretic, was to be run down like a mad dog. No outrage committed by the Catholic warrior on the miscreant enemy could deserve punishment. As soon as it was known that boundless license was thus given to barbarity and dissoluteness, thousands of wretches who cared nothing for the sacred cause, but who were eager to be exempted from the police of peaceful cities, and the discipline of well-governed camps, flocked to the standard of the faith. The men who had set up that standard were sincere, chaste, regardless of lucre, and perhaps, where only themselves were concerned, not unforgiving; but round that standard were assembled such gangs of rogues, ravishers, plunderers, and ferocious bravoes, as were scarcely ever found under the flag of any state engaged in a mere temporal quarrel. In a very similar way was the Jacobin party composed. There was a small nucleus of enthusiasts; round that nucleus was gathered a vast mass of ignoble depravity; and in all that mass there was nothing so depraved and so ignoble as Barère.

Then came those days when the most barbarous of all codes was administered by the most barbarous of all tribunals; when no man could greet his neighbours, or say his prayers, or dress his hair, without danger of committing a capital crime; when spies lurked in every corner; when the guillotine was long and hard at work every morning; when the jails were filled as close as the hold of a slave-ship; when the gutters ran foaming with blood into the Seine; when it was death to be great-niece of a captain of the royal guards, or half-brother of a doctor of the Sorbonne, to express a doubt whether assignats would not fall, to hint that the English had been victorious in the action of the first of June, to have a copy of one of Burke's pamphlets locked up in a desk, to laugh at a Jacobin for taking the name of Cassius or Timoleon, or to call the Fifth Sansculottide by its old superstitious name of St Matthew's Day. While the daily waggon-loads of victims were carried to their doom through the streets of Paris, the Proconsuls whom the sovereign Committee had sent forth to the departments revelled in an extravagance of cruelty unknown even in the capital. The knife of the deadly machine rose and fell too slow for their work of slaughter. Long rows of captives were mowed down with grapeshot. Holes were made in the bottom of crowded barges. Lyons was turned into a desert. At Arras even the cruel mercy of a speedy death was denied to the prisoners. All down the Loire, from Saumur to the sea, great flocks of crows and kites feasted on naked corpses, twined together in hideous embraces. No mercy was shown to sex or age. The number of young lads and of girls of seventeen who were murdered by that execrable government is to be reckoned by hundreds. Babies torn from the breast were tossed from pike to pike along the Jacobin ranks. One champion of liberty had his pockets well stuffed with ears. Another swaggered about with the finger of a little child in his hat. A few months had sufficed to degrade France below the level of New Zealand.

It is absurd to say that any amount of public danger can justify a system like this, we do not say on Christian principles, we do not say on the principles of a high morality, but even on principles of Machiavellian policy. It is true that great emergencies call for activity and vigilance; it is true that they justify severity which, in ordinary times, would deserve the name of cruelty. But indiscriminate severity can never, under any circumstances, be useful. It is plain that the whole efficacy of punishment depends on the care with which the guilty are distinguished. Punishment which strikes the guilty and the innocent promiscuously, operates merely like a pestilence or a great convulsion of nature, and has no more tendency to prevent offences than the cholera, or an earthquake like that of Lisbon, would have. The energy for which the Jacobin administration is praised was merely the energy of the Malay who maddens himself with opium, draws his knife, and runs amuck through the streets, slashing right and left at friends and foes. Such has never been the energy of truly great rulers; of Elizabeth, for example, of Oliver, or of Frederick. They were not, indeed, scrupulous. But, had they been less scrupulous than they were, the strength and amplitude of their minds would have preserved them from crimes such as those which the small men of the Committee of Public Safety took for daring strokes of policy. The great Queen who so long held her own against foreign and domestic enemies, against temporal and spiritual arms; the great Protector who governed with more than regal power, in despite both of royalists and republicans; the great King who, with a beaten army and an exhausted treasury, defended his little dominions to the last against the united efforts of Russia, Austria, and France; with what scorn would they have heard that it was impossible for them to strike a salutary terror into the disaffected without sending school-boys and school-girls to death by cart-loads and boat-loads!

The popular notion is, we believe, that the leading Terrorists were wicked men, but, at the same time, great men. We can see nothing great about them but their wickedness. That their policy was daringly original is a vulgar error. Their policy is as old as the oldest accounts which we have of human misgovernment. It seemed new in France and in the eighteenth century only because it had been long disused, for excellent reasons, by the enlightened part of mankind. But it has always prevailed, and still prevails, in savage and half-savage nations, and is the chief cause which prevents such nations from making advances towards civilisation. Thousands of deys, of beys, of pachas, of rajahs, of nabobs, have shown themselves as great masters of statecraft as the members of the Committee of Public Safety. Djezzar, we imagine, was superior to any of them in their new line. In fact, there is not a petty tyrant in Asia or Africa so dull or so unlearned as not to be fully qualified for the business of Jacobin police and Jacobin finance. To behead people by scores without caring whether they are guilty or innocent; to wring money out of the rich by the help of jailers and executioners; to rob the public creditor, and to put him to death if he remonstrates; to take loaves by force out of the bakers' shops; to clothe and mount soldiers by seizing on one man's wool and linen, and on another man's horses and saddles, without compensation; is of all modes of governing the simplest and most obvious. Of its morality we at present say nothing. But surely it requires no capacity beyond that of a barbarian or a child. By means like those which we have described, the Committee of Public Safety undoubtedly succeeded, for a short time, in enforcing profound submission, and in raising immense funds. But to enforce submission by butchery, and to raise funds by spoliation, is not statesmanship. The real statesman is he who, in troubled times, keeps down the turbulent without unnecessarily harassing the well-affected; and who, when great pecuniary resources are needed, provides for the public exigencies without violating the security of property and drying up the sources of future prosperity. Such a statesman, we are confident, might, in 1793, have preserved the independence of France without shedding a drop of innocent blood, without plundering a single warehouse. Unhappily, the Republic was subject to men who were mere demagogues and in no sense statesmen. They could declaim at a club. They could lead a rabble to mischief. But they had no skill to conduct the affairs of an empire. The want of skill they supplied for a time by atrocity and blind violence. For legislative ability, fiscal ability, military ability, diplomatic ability, they had one substitute, the guillotine. Indeed their exceeding ignorance, and the barrenness of their invention, are the best excuse for their murders and robberies. We really believe that they would not have cut so many throats, and picked so many pockets, if they had known how to govern in any other way.

That under their administration the war against the European Coalition was successfully conducted is true. But that war had been successfully conducted before their elevation, and continued to be successfully conducted after their fall. Terror was not the order of the day when Brussels opened its gates to Dumourier. Terror had ceased to be the order of the day when Piedmont and Lombardy were conquered by Bonaparte. The truth is, that France was saved, not by the Committee of Public Safety, but by the energy, patriotism, and valour of the French people. Those high qualities were victorious in spite of the incapacity of rulers whose administration was a tissue, not merely of crimes, but of blunders.

We have not time to tell how the leaders of the savage faction at length began to avenge mankind on each other: how the craven Hébert was dragged wailing and trembling to his doom; how the nobler Danton, moved by a late repentance, strove in vain to repair the evil which he had wrought, and half redeemed the great crime of September by manfully encountering death in the cause of mercy.

Our business is with Barère. In all those things he was not only consenting, but eagerly and joyously forward. Not merely was he one of the guilty administration. He was the man to whom was especially assigned the office of proposing and defending outrages on justice and humanity, and of furnishing to atrocious schemes an appropriate garb of atrocious rodomontade. Barère first proclaimed from the tribune of the Convention that terror must be the order of the day. It was by Barère that the Revolutionary Tribunal of Paris was provided with the aid of a public accuser worthy of such a court, the infamous Fouquier Tinville. It was Barère who, when one of the old members of the National Assembly had been absolved by the Revolutionary Tribunal, gave orders that a fresh jury should be summoned. "Acquit one of the National Assembly!" he cried. "The Tribunal is turning against the Revolution." It is unnecessary to say that the prisoner's head was soon in the basket. It was Barère who moved that the city of Lyons should be destroyed. "Let the plough," he cried from the tribune, "pass over her. Let her name cease to exist. The rebels are conquered; but are they all exterminated? No weakness. No mercy. Let every one be smitten. Two words will suffice to tell the whole. Lyons made war on liberty; Lyons is no more." When Toulon was taken Barère came forward to announce the event. "The conquest," said the apostate Brissotine, "won by the Mountain over the Brissotines must be commemorated by a mark set on the place where Toulon once stood. The national thunder must crush the house of every trader in the town. When Camille Desmoulins, long distinguished among the republicans by zeal and ability, dared to raise his eloquent voice against the Reign of Terror, and to point out the close analogy between the government which then oppressed France and the government of the worst of the Cæsars, Barère rose to complain of the weak compassion which tried to revive the hopes of the aristocracy. "Whoever," he said, "is nobly born is a man to be suspected. Every priest, every frequenter of the old court, every lawyer, every banker, is a man to be suspected. Every person who grumbles at the course which the Revolution takes is a man to be suspected. There are whole castes already tried and condemned. There are callings which carry their doom with them. There are relations of blood which the law regards with an evil eye. Republicans of France!" yelled the renegade Girondist, the old enemy of the Mountain—"Republicans of France! the Brissotines led you by gentle means to slavery. The Mountain leads you by strong measures to freedom. Oh! who can count the evils which a false compassion may produce?" When the friends of Danton mustered courage to express a wish that the Convention would at least hear him in his own defence before it sent him to certain death, the voice of Barère was the loudest in opposition to their prayer. When the crimes of Lebon, one of the worst, if not the very worst, of the vicegerents of the Committee of Public Safety, had so maddened the people of the Department of the North that they resorted to the desperate expedient of imploring the protection of the Convention, Barère pleaded the cause of the accused tyrant, and threatened the petitioners with the utmost vengeance of the government. "These charges," he said, "have been suggested by wily aristocrats. The man who crushes the enemies of the people, though he may be hurried by his zeal into some excesses, can never be a proper object of censure. The proceedings of Lebon may have been a little harsh as to form." One of the small irregularities thus gently censured was this: Lebon kept a wretched man a quarter of an hour under the knife of the guillotine, in order to torment him, by reading to him, before he was despatched, a letter, the contents of which were supposed to be such as would aggravate even the bitterness of death. "But what," proceeded Barère, "is not permitted to the hatred of a republican against aristocracy? How many generous sentiments atone for what may perhaps seem acrimonious in the prosecution of public enemies? Revolutionary measures are always to be spoken of with respect. Liberty is a virgin whose veil it is not lawful to lift."

After this, it would be idle to dwell on facts which would indeed, of themselves, suffice to render a name infamous, but which make no perceptible addition to the great infamy of Barère. It would be idle, for example, to relate how he, a man of letters, a member of an Academy of Inscriptions, was foremost in that war against learning, art, and history which disgraced the Jacobin government; how he recommended a general conflagration of libraries; how he proclaimed that all records of events anterior to the Revolution ought to be destroyed; how he laid waste the Abbey of St Denis, pulled down monuments consecrated by the veneration of ages, and scattered on the wind the dust of ancient kings. He was, in truth, seldom so well employed as when he turned for a moment from making war on the living to make war on the dead.

Equally idle would it be to dilate on his sensual excesses. That in Barère as in the whole breed of Neros, Caligulas, and Domitians whom he resembled, voluptuousness was mingled with cruelty; that he withdrew, twice in every decade, from the work of blood, to the smiling gardens of Clichy, and there forgot public cares in the madness of wine and in the arms of courtesans, has often been repeated. M. Hippolyte Carnot does not altogether deny the truth of these stories, but justly observes that Barère's dissipation was not carried to such a point as to interfere with his industry. Nothing can be more true. Barère was by no means so much addicted to debauchery as to neglect the work of murder. It was his boast that, even during his hours of recreation, he cut out work for the Revolutionary Tribunal. To those who expressed a fear that his exertions would hurt his health, he gaily answered that he was less busy than they thought. "The guillotine," he said, "does all; the guillotine governs." For ourselves, we are much more disposed to look indulgently on the pleasures which he allowed to himself than on the pain which he inflicted on his neighbours.

"Atque utinam his potius nugis tota illa dedisset
Tempora sævitiæ, claras quibus abstulit urbi
Illustresque animas, impune ac vindice nullo."

An immoderate appetite for sensual gratifications is undoubtedly a blemish on the fame of Henry the Fourth, of Lord Somers, of Mr Fox. But the vices of honest men are the virtues of Barère.

And now Barère had become a really cruel man. It was from mere pusillanimity that he had perpetrated his first great crimes. But the whole history of our race proves that the taste for the misery of others is a taste which minds not naturally ferocious may too easily acquire, and which, when once acquired, is as strong as any of the propensities with which we are born. A very few months had sufficed to bring this man into a state of mind in which images of despair, wailing, and death had an exhilarating effect on him, and inspired him as wine and love inspire men of free and joyous natures. The cart creaking under its daily freight of victims, ancient men and lads, and fair young girls, the binding of the hands, the thrusting of the head out of the little national sash-window, the crash of the axe, the pool of blood beneath the scaffold, the heads rolling by scores in the panier—these things were to him what Lalage and a cask of Falernian were to Horace, what Rosette and a bottle of iced champagne are to De Béranger. As soon as he began to speak of slaughter his heart seemed to be enlarged, and his fancy to become unusually fertile of conceits and gasconades. Robespierre, Saint Just, and Billaud, whose barbarity was the effect of earnest and gloomy hatred, were, in his view, men who made a toil of a pleasure. Cruelty was no such melancholy business, to be gone about with an austere brow and a whining tone; it was a recreation, fitly accompanied by singing and laughing. In truth, Robespierre and Barère might be well compared to the two renowned hangmen of Louis the Eleventh. They were alike insensible of pity, alike bent on havoc. But, while they murdered, one of them frowned and canted, the other grinned and joked. For our own part, we prefer *Jean qui pleure* to *Jean qui rit.*

In the midst of the funeral gloom which overhung Paris, a gaiety stranger and more ghastly than the horrors of the prison and the scaffold distinguished the dwelling of Barère. Every morning a crowd of suitors assembled to implore his protection. He came forth in his rich dressing-gown, went round the antechamber, dispensed smiles and promises among the obsequious crowd, addressed himself with peculiar animation to every handsome woman who appeared in the circle, and complimented her in the florid style of Gascony on the bloom of her cheeks and the lustre of her eyes. When he had enjoyed the fear and anxiety of his suppliants he dismissed them, and flung all their memorials unread into the fire. This was the best way, he conceived, to prevent arrears of business from accumulating. Here he was only an imitator. Cardinal Dubois had been in the habit of clearing his table of papers in the same way. Nor was this the only point in which we could point out a resemblance between the worst statesman of the monarchy and the worst statesman of the republic.

Of Barère's peculiar vein of pleasantry a notion may be formed from an anecdote which one of his intimate associates, a juror of the revolutionary tribunal, has related. A courtesan who bore a conspicuous part in the orgies of Clichy implored Barère to use his power against a head-dress which did not suit her style of face, and which a rival beauty was trying to bring into fashion. One of the magistrates of the capital was summoned and received the necessary orders. Aristocracy, Barère said, was again rearing its front. These new wigs were counter-revolutionary. He had reason to know that they were made out of the long fair hair of handsome aristocrats who had died by the national chopper. Every lady who adorned herself with the relics of criminals might justly be suspected of incivism. This ridiculous lie imposed on the authorities of Paris. Female citizens were solemnly warned against the obnoxious ringlets, and were left to choose between their head-dresses and their heads. Barère's delight at the success of this facetious fiction was quite extravagant: he could not tell the story without going into such convulsions of laughter as made his hearers hope that he was about to choke. There was something peculiarly tickling and exhilarating to his mind in this grotesque combination of the frivolous with the horrible, of false locks and curling-irons with spouting arteries and reeking hatchets.

But, though Barère succeeded in earning the honourable nicknames of the Witling of Terror, and the Anacreon of the Guillotine, there was one place where it was long remembered to his disadvantage that he had, for a time, talked the language of humanity and moderation. That place was the Jacobin club. Even after he had borne the chief part in the massacre of the Girondists, in the murder of the Queen, in the destruction of Lyons, he durst not show himself within that sacred precinct. At one meeting of the society, a member complained that the committee to which the supreme direction of affairs was entrusted, after all the changes which had been made, still contained one man who was not trustworthy. Robespierre, whose influence over the Jacobins was boundless, undertook the defence of his colleague, owned there was some ground for what had been said, but spoke highly of Barère's industry and aptitude for business. This seasonable interposition silenced the accuser; but it was long before the neophyte could venture to appear at the club.

At length a masterpiece of wickedness, unique, we think, even among Barère's great achievements, obtained his full pardon even from that rigid conclave. The insupportable tyranny of the Committee of Public Safety had at length brought the minds of men, and even of women, into a fierce and hard temper, which defied or welcomed death. The life which might be any morning taken away, in consequence of the whisper of a private enemy, seemed of little value. It was something to die after smiting one of the oppressors; it was something to bequeath to the surviving tyrants a terror not inferior to that which they had themselves inspired. Human nature, hunted and worried to the utmost, now turned furiously to bay. Fouquier Tinville was afraid to walk the streets; a pistol was snapped at Collot D'Herbois; a young girl, animated apparently by the spirit of Charlotte Corday, attempted to obtain an interview with Robespierre. Suspicions arose; she was searched; and two knives were found about her. She was questioned, and spoke of the Jacobin domination with resolute scorn and aversion. It is unnecessary to say that she was sent to the guillotine. Barère declared from the tribune that the cause of these attempts was evident. Pitt and his guineas had done the whole. The English Government had organised a vast system of murder, had armed the hand of Charlotte Corday, and had now, by similar means, attacked two of the most eminent friends of liberty in France. It is needless to say that these imputations were, not only false, but destitute of all show of truth. Nay, they were demonstrably absurd: for the assassins to whom Barère referred rushed on certain death, a sure proof that they were not hirelings. The whole wealth of England would not have bribed any sane person to do what Charlotte Corday did. But, when we consider her as an enthusiast, her conduct is perfectly natural. Even those French writers who are childish enough to believe that the English Government contrived the infernal machine and strangled the Emperor Paul have fully acquitted Mr Pitt of all share in the death of Marat and in the attempt on Robespierre. Yet on calumnies so futile as those which we have mentioned did Barère ground a motion at which all Christendom stood aghast. He proposed a decree that no quarter should be given to any English or

Hanoverian soldier.* His Carmagnole was worthy of the proposition with which it concluded. "That one Englishman should be spared, that for the slaves of George, for the human machines of York, the vocabulary of our armies should contain such a word as generosity, this is what the National Convention cannot endure. War to the death against every English soldier. If last year, at Dunkirk, quarter had been refused to them when they asked it on their knees, if our troops had exterminated them all, instead of suffering them to infest our fortresses by their presence, the English government would not have renewed its attack on our frontiers this year. It is only the dead man who never comes back. What is this moral pestilence which has introduced into our armies false ideas of humanity? That the English were to be treated with indulgence was the philanthropic notion of the Brissotines; it was the patriotic practice of Dumourier. But humanity consists in exterminating our enemies. No mercy to the execrable Englishman. Such are the sentiments of the true Frenchman; for he knows that he belongs to a nation revolutionary as nature, powerful as freedom, ardent as the saltpetre which she has just torn from the entrails of the earth. Soldiers of liberty, when victory places Englishmen at your mercy, strike! None of them must return to the servile soil of Great Britain; none must pollute the free soil of France."

The Convention, thoroughly tamed and silenced, acquiesced in Barère's motion without debate. And now at last the doors of the Jacobin Club were thrown open to the disciple who had surpassed his masters. He was admitted a member by acclamation, and was soon selected to preside.

For a time he was not without hope that his decree would be carried into full effect. Intelligence arrived from the seat of war of a sharp contest between some French and English troops, in which the Republicans had the advantage, and in which no prisoners had been made. Such things happen occasionally in all wars. Barère, however, attributed the ferocity of this combat to his darling decree, and entertained the Convention with another Carmagnole.

"The Republicans," he said, "saw a division in red uniform at a distance. The red-coats are attacked with the bayonet. Not one of them escapes the blows of the Republicans. All the red-coats have been killed. No mercy, no indulgence, has been shown towards the villains. Not an Englishman whom the Republicans could reach is now living. How many prisoners should you guess that we have made? One single prisoner is the result of this great day."

And now this bad man's craving for blood had become insatiable. The more he quaffed, the more he thirsted. He had begun with the English; but soon he came down with a proposition for new massacres. "All the troops," he said, "of the coalesced tyrants in garrison at Condé, Valenciennes, Le Quesnoy, and Landrecies, ought to be put to the sword unless they surrender at discretion in twenty-four hours. The English, of course, will be admitted to no capitulation whatever. With the English we have no treaty but death. As to the rest, surrender at discretion in twenty-four hours, or death, these are our conditions. If the slaves resist, let them feel the edge of the sword." And then he waxed facetious. "On these terms the Republic is willing to give them a lesson in the art of war." At that jest, some hearers, worthy of such a speaker, set up a laugh. Then he became serious again. "Let the enemy perish," he cried, "I have already said it from this tribune. It is only the dead man who never comes back. Kings will not conspire against us in the grave. Armies will not fight against us when they are annihilated. Let our war with them be a war of extermination. What pity is due to slaves whom the Emperor leads to war under the cane; whom the King of Prussia beats to the shambles with the flat of the sword; and whom the Duke of York makes drunk with rum and gin?" And at the rum and gin the Mountain and the galleries laughed again.

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* M. Hippolyte Carnot does his best to excuse this decree. His abuse of England is merely laughable. England has managed to deal with enemies of a very different sort from either himself or his hero. One disgraceful blunder, however, we think it right to notice.

M. Hippolyte Carnot asserts that a motion similar to that of Barère was made in the English Parliament by the late Lord Fitzwilliam. This assertion is false. We defy M. Hippolyte Carnot to state the date and terms of the motion of which he speaks. We do not accuse him of intentional misrepresentation; but we confidently accuse him of extreme ignorance and temerity. Our readers will be amused to learn on what authority he has ventured to publish such a fable. He quotes, not the Journals of the Lords, not the Parliamentary Debates, but a ranting message of the Executive Directory to the Five Hundred, a message, too, the whole meaning of which he has utterly misunderstood.

If Barère had been able to effect his purpose, it is difficult to estimate the extent of the calamity which he would have brought on the human race. No government, however averse to cruelty, could, in justice to its own subjects, have given quarter to enemies who gave none. Retaliation would have been, not merely justifiable, but a sacred duty. It would have been necessary for Howe and Nelson to make every French sailor whom they took walk the plank. England has no peculiar reason to dread the introduction of such a system. On the contrary, the operation of Barère's new law of war would have been more unfavourable to his countrymen than to ours; for we believe that, from the beginning to the end of the war, there never was a time at which the number of French prisoners in England was not greater than the number of English prisoners in France; and so, we apprehend, it will be in all wars while England retains her maritime superiority. Had the murderous decree of the Convention been in force from 1794 to 1815, we are satisfied that, for every Englishman slain by the French, at least three Frenchmen would have been put to the sword by the English. It is, therefore, not as Englishmen, but as members of the great society of mankind, that we speak with indignation and horror of the change which Barère attempted to introduce. The mere slaughter would have been the smallest part of the evil. The butchering of a single unarmed man in cold blood, under an act of the legislature, would have produced more evil than the carnage of ten such fields as Albuera. Public law would have been subverted from the foundations; national enmities would have been inflamed to a degree of rage which happily it is not easy for us to conceive; cordial peace would have been impossible. The moral character of the European nations would have been rapidly and deeply corrupted; for in all countries those men whose calling is to put their lives in jeopardy for the defence of the public weal enjoy high consideration, and are considered as the best arbitrators on points of honour and manly bearing. With the standard of morality established in the military profession the general standard of morality must to a great extent sink or rise. It is, therefore, a fortunate circumstance that, during a long course of years, respect for the weak and clemency towards the vanquished have been considered as qualities not less essential to the accomplished soldier than personal courage. How long would this continue to be the case, if the slaying of prisoners were a part of the daily duty of the warrior? What man of kind and generous nature would, under such a system, willingly bear arms? Who, that was compelled to bear arms, would long continue kind and generous? And is it not certain that, if barbarity towards the helpless became the characteristic of military men, the taint must rapidly spread to civil and to domestic life, and must show itself in all the dealings of the strong with the weak, of husbands with wives, of employers with workmen, of creditors with debtors?

But, thank God, Barère's decree was a mere dead letter. It was to be executed by men very different from those who, in the interior of France, were the instruments of the Committee of Public Safety, who prated at Jacobin Clubs, and ran to Fouquier Tinville with charges of incivism against women whom they could not seduce, and bankers from whom they could not extort money. The warriors who, under Hoche, had guarded the walls of Dunkirk, and who, under Kléber, had made good the defence of the wood of Monceaux, shrank with horror from an office more degrading than that of the hangman. "The Convention," said an officer to his men, "has sent orders that all the English prisoners shall be shot." "We will not shoot them," answered a stout-hearted sergeant. "Send them to the Convention. If the deputies take pleasure in killing a prisoner, they may kill him themselves, and eat him too, like savages as they are." This was the sentiment of the whole army. Bonaparte, who thoroughly understood war, who at Jaffa and elsewhere gave ample proof that he was not unwilling to strain the laws of war to their utmost rigour, and whose hatred of England amounted to a folly, always spoke of Barère's decree with loathing, and boasted that the army had refused to obey the Convention.

Such disobedience on the part of any other class of citizens would have been instantly punished by wholesale massacre; but the Committee of Public Safety was aware that the discipline which had tamed the unwarlike population of the fields and cities might not answer in camps. To fling people by scores out of a boat, and, when they catch hold of it, to chop off their fingers with a hatchet, is undoubtedly a very agreeable pastime for a thoroughbred Jacobin, when the sufferers are, as at Nantes, old confessors, young girls, or women with child. But such sport might prove a little dangerous if tried upon grim ranks of grenadiers, marked with the scars of Hondschoote, and singed by the smoke of Fleurus.

Barère, however, found some consolation. If he could not succeed in murdering the English and the Hanoverians, he was amply indemnified by a new and vast slaughter of his own countrymen and countrywomen. If the defence which has been set up for the members of the Committee of Public Safety had been well founded, if it had been true that they governed with extreme severity only because the republic was in extreme peril, it is clear that the severity would have diminished as the peril diminished. But the fact is, that those cruelties for which the public danger is made a plea became more and more enormous as the danger became less and less, and reached the full height when there was no longer any danger at all. In the autumn of 1793, there was undoubtedly reason to apprehend that France might be unable to maintain the struggle against the European coalition. The enemy was triumphant on the frontiers. More than half the departments disowned the authority of the Convention. But at that time eight or ten necks a day were thought an ample allowance for the guillotine of the capital. In the summer of 1794, Bordeaux, Toulon, Caen, Lyons, Marseilles, had submitted to the ascendency of Paris. The French arms were victorious under the Pyrenees and on the Sambre. Brussels had fallen. Prussia had announced her intention of withdrawing from the contest. The Republic, no longer content with defending her own independence, was beginning to meditate conquest beyond the Alps and the Rhine. She was now more formidable to her neighbours than ever Louis the Fourteenth had been. And now the Revolutionary Tribunal of Paris was not content with forty, fifty, sixty heads in a morning. It was just after a series of victories, which destroyed the whole force of the single argument which has been urged in defence of the system of terror, that the Committee of Public Safety resolved to infuse into that system an energy hitherto unknown. It was proposed to reconstruct the Revolutionary Tribunal, and to collect in the space of two pages the whole revolutionary jurisprudence. Lists of twelve judges and fifty jurors were made out from among the fiercest Jacobins. The substantive law was simply this, that whatever the tribunal should think pernicious to the republic was a capital crime. The law of evidence was simply this, that whatever satisfied the jurors was sufficient proof. The law of procedure was of a piece with everything else. There was to be an advocate against the prisoner, and no advocate for him. It was expressly declared that, if the jurors were in any manner convinced of the guilt of the prisoner, they might convict him without hearing a single witness. The only punishment which the court could inflict was death.

Robespierre proposed this decree. When he had read it, a murmur rose from the Convention. The fear which had long restrained the deputies from opposing the Committee was overcome by a stronger fear. Every man felt the knife at his throat. "The decree," said one, "is of grave importance. I move that it be printed and the debate be adjourned. If such a measure were adopted without time for consideration, I would blow my brains out at once." The motion for adjournment was seconded. Then Barère sprang up. "It is impossible," he said, "that there can be any difference of opinion among us as to a law like this, a law so favourable in all respects to patriots; a law which insures the speedy punishment of conspirators. If there is to be an adjournment, I must insist that it shall not be for more than three days." The opposition was overawed; the decree was passed; and, during the six weeks which followed, the havoc was such as has never been known before.

And now the evil was beyond endurance. That timid majority which had for a time supported the Girondists, and which had, after their fall, contented itself with registering in silence the decrees of the Committee of Public Safety, at length drew courage from despair. Leaders of bold and firm character were not wanting, men such as Fouché and Tallien, who, having been long conspicuous among the chiefs of the Mountain, now found that their own lives, or lives still dearer to them than their own, were in extreme peril. Nor could it be longer kept secret that there was a schism in the despotic committee. On one side were Robespierre, Saint Just, and Couthon; on the other, Collot and Billaud. Barère leaned towards these last, but only leaned towards them. As was ever his fashion when a great crisis was at hand, he fawned alternately on both parties, struck alternately at both, and held himself in readiness to chant the praises or to sign the death-warrant of either. In any event his Carmagnole was ready. The tree of liberty, the blood of traitors, the dagger of Brutus, the guineas of perfidious Albion, would do equally well for Billaud and for Robespierre.

The first attack which was made on Robespierre was indirect. An old woman named Catherine Théot, half maniac, half impostor, was protected by him, and exercised a strange influence over his mind; for he was naturally prone to superstition, and, having abjured the faith in which he had been brought up, was looking about for something to believe. Barère drew up a report against Catherine, which contained many facetious conceits, and ended, as might be expected, with a motion for sending her and some other wretched creatures of both sexes to the Revolutionary Tribunal, or, in other words, to death. This report, however, he did not dare to read to the Convention himself. Another member, less timid, was induced to farther the cruel buffoonery; and the real author enjoyed in security the dismay and vexation of Robespierre.

Barère now thought that he had done enough on one side, and that it was time to make his peace with the other. On the seventh of Thermidor, he pronounced in the Convention a panegyric on Robespierre. "That representative of the people," he said, "enjoys a reputation for patriotism, earned by five years of exertion, and by unalterable fidelity to the principles of independence and liberty." On the eighth of Thermidor, it became clear that a decisive struggle was at hand. Robespierre struck the first blow. He mounted the tribune, and uttered a long invective on his opponents. It was moved that his discourse should be printed; and Barère spoke for the printing. The sense of the Convention soon appeared to be the other way; and Barère apologised for his former speech, and implored his colleagues to abstain from disputes which could be agreeable only to Pitt and York. On the next day, the ever-memorable ninth of Thermidor, came the real tug of war. Tallien, bravely taking his life in his hand, led the onset. Billaud followed; and then all that infinite hatred which had long been kept down by terror burst forth, and swept every barrier before it. When at length the voice of Robespierre, drowned by the President's bell, and by shouts of "Down with the tyrant!" had died away in hoarse gasping, Barère rose. He began with timid and doubtful phrases, watched the effect of every word he uttered, and, when the feeling of the Assembly had been unequivocally manifested, declared against Robespierre. But it was not till the people out of doors, and especially the gunners of Paris, had espoused the cause of the Convention, that Barère felt quite at ease. Then he sprang to the tribune, poured forth a Carmagnole about Pisistratus and Catiline, and concluded by moving that the heads of Robespierre and Robespierre's accomplices should be cut off without a trial. The motion was carried. On the following morning the vanquished members of the Committee of Public Safety and their principal adherents suffered death. It was exactly one year since Barère had commenced his career of slaughter by moving the proscription of his old allies the Girondists. We greatly doubt whether any human being has ever succeeded in packing more wickedness into the space of three hundred and sixty-five days.

The ninth of Thermidor is one of the great epochs in the history of Europe. It is true that the three members of the Committee of Public Safety who triumphed were by no means better men than the three who fell. Indeed, we are inclined to think that of these six statesmen the least bad were Robespierre and Saint Just, whose cruelty was the effect of sincere fanaticism operating on narrow understandings and acrimonious tempers. The worst of the six was, beyond all doubt, Barère, who had no faith in any part of the system which he upheld by persecution; who, while he sent his fellow-creatures to death for being the third cousins of royalists, had not in the least made up his mind that a republic was better than a monarchy; who, while he slew his old friends for federalism, was himself far more a federalist than any of them; who had become a murderer merely for his safety, and who continued to be a murderer merely for his pleasure.

The tendency of the vulgar is to embody everything. Some individual is selected, and often selected very injudicially, as the representative of every great movement of the public mind, of every great revolution in human affairs; and on this individual are concentrated all the love and all the hatred, all the admiration and all the contempt, which he ought rightfully to share with a whole party, a whole sect, a whole nation, a whole generation. Perhaps no human being has suffered so much from this propensity of the multitude as Robespierre. He is regarded, not merely as what he was, an envious, malevolent zealot, but as the incarnation of Terror, as Jacobinism personified. The truth is, that it was not by him that the system of terror was carried to the last extreme. The most horrible days in the history of the Revolutionary Tribunal of Paris were those which immediately preceded the ninth of Thermidor. Robespierre had then ceased to attend the meetings of the sovereign Committee; and the direction of affairs was really in the hands of Billaud, of Collot, and of Barère.

It had never occurred to those three tyrants that, in overthrowing Robespierre, they were overthrowing that system of terror to which they were more attached than he had ever been. Their object was to go on slaying even more mercilessly than before. But they had misunderstood the nature of the great crisis which had at last arrived. The yoke of the Committee was broken for ever. The Convention had regained its liberty, had tried its strength, had vanquished and punished its enemies. A great reaction had commenced. Twenty-four hours after Robespierre had ceased to live, it was moved and carried, amidst loud bursts of applause, that the sittings of the Revolutionary Tribunal should be suspended. Billaud was not at that moment present. He entered the hall soon after, learned with indignation what had passed, and moved that the vote should be rescinded. But loud cries of "No, no!" rose from those benches which had lately paid mute obedience to his commands. Barère came forward on the same day, and abjured the Convention not to relax the system of terror. "Beware, above all things," he cried, "of that fatal moderation which talks of peace and of clemency. Let aristocracy know that here she will find only enemies sternly bent on vengeance, and judges who have no pity." But the day of the Carmagnoles was over: the restraint of fear had been relaxed; and the hatred with which the nation regarded the Jacobin dominion broke forth with ungovernable violence. Not more strongly did the tide of public opinion run against the old monarchy and aristocracy, at the time of the taking of the Bastile, than it now ran against the tyranny of the Mountain. From every dungeon the prisoners came forth as they had gone in, by hundreds. The decree which forbade the soldiers of the republic to give quarter to the English was repealed by an unanimous vote, amidst loud acclamations; nor, passed as it was, disobeyed as it was, and rescinded as it was, can it be with justice considered as a blemish on the fame of the French nation. The Jacobin Club was refractory. It was suppressed without resistance. The surviving Girondist deputies, who had concealed themselves from the vengeance of their enemies in caverns and garrets, were readmitted to their seats in the Convention. No day passed without some signal reparation of injustice; no street in Paris was without some trace of the recent change. In the theatre, the bust of Marat was pulled down from its pedestal and broken in pieces, amidst the applause of the audience. His carcass was ejected from the Pantheon. The celebrated picture of his death, which had hung in the hall of the Convention, was removed. The savage inscriptions with which the walls of the city had been covered disappeared; and, in place of death and terror, humanity, the watchword of the new rulers, was everywhere to be seen. In the meantime, the gay spirit of France, recently subdued by oppression, and now elated by the joy of a great deliverance, wantoned in a thousand forms. Art, taste, luxury, revived. Female beauty regained its empire —an empire strengthened by the remembrance of all the tender and all the sublime virtues which women, delicately bred and reputed frivolous, had displayed during the evil days. Refined manners, chivalrous sentiments, followed in the train of love. The dawn of the Arctic summer day after the Arctic winter night, the great unsealing of the waters, the awakening of animal and vegetable life, the sudden softening of the air, the sudden blooming of the flowers, the sudden bursting of old forests into verdure, is but a feeble type of that happiest and most genial of revolutions, the revolution of the ninth of Thermidor.

But, in the midst of the revival of all kind and generous sentiments, there was one portion of the community against which mercy itself seemed to cry out for vengeance. The chiefs of the late government and their tools were now never named but as the men of blood, the drinkers of blood, the cannibals. In some parts of France, where the creatures of the Mountain had acted with peculiar barbarity, the populace took the law into its own hands and meted out justice to the Jacobins with the true Jacobin measure; but at Paris the punishments were inflicted with order and decency, and were few when compared with the number, and lenient when compared with the enormity, of the crimes. Soon after the ninth of Thermidor, two of the vilest of mankind, Fouquier Tinville, whom Barère had placed at the Revolutionary Tribunal, and Lebon, whom Barère had defended in the Convention, were placed under arrest. A third miscreant soon shared their fate, Carrier, the tyrant of Nantes. The trials of these men brought to light horrors surpassing anything that Suetonius and Lampridius have related of the worst Cæsars. But it was impossible to punish subordinate agents, who, bad as they were, had only acted in accordance with the spirit of the government which they served, and, at the same time, to grant impunity to the heads of the wicked administration. A cry was raised, both within and without the Convention, for justice on Collot, Billaud, and Barère.

Collot and Billaud, with all their vices, appear to have been men of resolute natures. They made no submission; but opposed to the hatred of mankind, at first a fierce resistance, and afterwards a dogged and sullen endurance. Barère, on the other hand, as soon as he began to understand the real nature of the revolution of Thermidor, attempted to abandon the Mountain, and to obtain admission among his old friends of the moderate party. He declared everywhere that he had never been in favour of severe measures; that he was a Girondist; that he had always condemned and lamented the manner in which the Brissotine deputies had been treated. He now preached mercy from that tribune from which he had recently preached extermination. "The time," he said, "has come at which our clemency may be indulged without danger. We may now safely consider temporary imprisonment as an adequate punishment for political misdemeanours." It was only a fortnight since, from the same place, he had declaimed against the moderation which dared even to talk of clemency; it was only a fortnight since he had ceased to send men and women to the guillotine of Paris, at the rate of three hundred a week, He now wished to make his peace with the moderate party at the expense of the Terrorists, as he had, a year before, made his peace with the Terrorists at the expense of the moderate party. But he was disappointed. He had left himself no retreat. His face, his voice, his rants, his jokes, had become hateful to the Convention. When he spoke he was interrupted by murmurs. Bitter reflections were daily cast on his cowardice and perfidy. On one occasion Carnot rose to give an account of a victory, and so far forgot the gravity of his own character as to indulge in the sort of oratory which Barère had affected on similar occasions. He was interrupted by cries of " No more Carmagnoles !" " No more of Barère's puns !"

At length, five months after the revolution of Thermidor, the Convention resolved that a committee of twenty-one members should be appointed to examine into the conduct of Billaud, Collot, and Barère. In some weeks the report was made. From that report we learn that a paper had been discovered, signed by Barère, and containing a proposition for adding the last improvement to the system of terror. France was to be divided into circuits; itinerant revolutionary tribunals, composed of trusty Jacobins, were to move from department to department ; and the guillotine was to travel in their train.

Barère, in his defence, insisted that no speech or motion which he had made in the Convention could, without a violation of the freedom of debate, be treated as a crime. He was asked how he could resort to such a mode of defence, after putting to death so many deputies on account of opinions expressed in the Convention. He had nothing to say, but that it was much to be regretted that the sound principle had ever been violated.

He arrogated to himself a large share of the merit of the revolution in Thermidor. The men who had risked their lives to effect that revolution, and who knew that, if they had failed, Barère would, in all probability, have moved the decree for beheading them without a trial, and have drawn up a proclamation announcing their guilt and their punishment to all France, were by no means disposed to acquiesce in his claims. He was reminded that, only forty-eight hours before the decisive conflict, he had, in the tribune, been profuse of adulation to Robespierre. His answer to this reproach is worthy of himself. " It was necessary," he said, " to dissemble. It was necessary to flatter Robespierre's vanity, and, by panegyric, to impel him to the attack. This was the motive which induced me to load him with those praises of which you complain. Who ever blamed Brutus for dissembling with Tarquin ?"

The accused triumvirs had only one chance of escaping punishment. There was severe distress at that moment among the working people of the capital. This distress the Jacobins attributed to the reaction of Thermidor, to the lenity with which the aristocrats were now treated, and to the measures which had been adopted against the chiefs of the late administration. Nothing is too absurd to be believed by a populace which has not breakfasted, and which does not know how it is to dine. The rabble of the Faubourg St Antoine rose, menaced the deputies, and demanded with loud cries the liberation of the persecuted patriots. But the Convention was no longer such as it had been, when similar means were employed too successfully against the Girondists. Its spirit was roused. Its strength had been proved. Military means were at its command. The tumult was suppressed : and it was decreed that same evening that Collot, Billaud, and Barère should instantly be removed to a distant place of confinement.

The next day the order of the Convention was executed. The account which Barère has given of his journey is the most interesting and the most trustworthy part of these Memoirs. There is no witness so infamous that a court of justice will not take his word against himself; and even Barère may be believed when he tells us how much he was hated and despised.

The carriage in which he was to travel passed, surrounded by armed men, along the street of St Honoré. A crowd soon gathered round it and increased every moment. On the long flight of steps before the church of St Roch stood rows of eager spectators. It was with difficulty that the coach could make its way through those who hung upon it, hooting, cursing, and striving to burst the doors. Barère thought his life in danger, and was conducted at his own request to a public office, where he hoped that he might find shelter till the crowd should disperse. In the meantime, another discussion on his fate took place in the Convention. It was proposed to deal with him as he had dealt with better men, to put him out of the pale of the law, and to deliver him at once without any trial to the headsman. But the humanity which, since the ninth of Thermidor, had generally directed the public councils restrained the deputies from taking this course.

It was now night; and the streets gradually became quiet. The clock struck twelve; and Barère, under a strong guard, again set forth on his journey. He was conducted over the river to the place where the Orleans road branches off from the southern boulevard. Two travelling carriages stood there. In one of them was Billaud, attended by two officers; in the other two more officers were waiting to receive Barère. Collot was already on the road.

At Orleans, a city which had suffered cruelly from the Jacobin tyranny, the three deputies were surrounded by a mob bent on tearing them to pieces. All the national guards of the neighbourhood were assembled; and this force was not greater than the emergency required; for the multitude pursued the carriages far on the road to Blois.

At Amboise the prisoners learned that Tours was ready to receive them. The stately bridge was occupied by a throng of people, who swore that the men under whose rule the Loire had been choked with corpses should have full personal experience of the nature of a *noyade*. In consequence of this news, the officers who had charge of the criminals made such arrangements that the carriages reached Tours at two in the morning, and drove straight to the post-house. Fresh horses were instantly ordered; and the travellers started again at full gallop. They had, in truth, not a moment to lose; for the alarm had been given; lights were seen in motion; and the yells of a great multitude, disappointed of its revenge, mingled with the sound of the departing wheels.

At Poitiers there was another narrow escape. As the prisoners quitted the post-house, they saw the whole population pouring in fury down the steep declivity on which the city is built. They passed near Niort, but could not venture to enter it. The inhabitants came forth with threatening aspect, and vehemently cried to the postillions to stop; but the postillions urged the horses to full speed, and soon left the town behind. Through such dangers the men of blood were brought in safety to Rochelle.

Oléron was the place of their destination, a dreary island beaten by the raging waves of the Bay of Biscay. The prisoners were confined in the castle; each had a single chamber, at the door of which a guard was placed; and each was allowed the ration of a single soldier. They were not allowed to communicate either with the garrison or with the population of the island; and soon after their arrival they were denied the indulgence of walking on the ramparts. The only place where they were suffered to take exercise was the esplanade where the troops were drilled.

They had not been long in this situation when news came that the Jacobins of Paris had made a last attempt to regain ascendency in the state, that the hall of the Convention had been forced by a furious crowd, that one of the deputies had been murdered and his head fixed on a pike, that the life of the President had been for a time in imminent danger, and that some members of the legislature had not been ashamed to join the rioters. But troops had arrived in time to prevent a massacre. The insurgents had been put to flight; the inhabitants of the disaffected quarters of the capital had been disarmed; the guilty deputies had suffered the just punishment of their treason; and the power of the Mountain was broken for ever. These events strengthened the aversion with which the system of terror and the authors of that system were regarded. One member of the Convention had moved that the three prisoners of Oléron should be put to death; another, that they should be brought back to Paris, and tried by a council of war. These propositions were rejected. But something was conceded to the party which called for severity. A vessel which had been fitted out with great expedition at Rochefort touched at Oléron; and it was announced to Collot and Billaud that they must instantly go on board. They were forthwith conveyed to Guiana, where Collot soon drank himself to death with brandy. Billaud lived many years, shunning his fellow-creatures and shunned by them; and diverted his lonely hours by teaching parrots to talk. Why a distinction was made between Barère and his companions in guilt, neither he nor any other writer, as far as we know, has explained. It does not appear that the distinction was meant to be at all in his favour; for orders soon arrived from Paris, that he should be brought to trial for his crimes before the criminal court of the department of the Upper Charente. He was accordingly brought back to the continent, and confined during some months at Saintes, in an old convent which had lately been turned into a jail.

While he lingered here, the reaction which had followed the great crisis of Thermidor met with a temporary check. The friends of the House of Bourbon, presuming on the indulgence with which they had been treated after the fall of Robespierre, not only ventured to avow their opinions with little disguise, but at length took arms against the Convention, and were not put down till much blood had been shed in the streets of Paris. The vigilance of the public authorities was therefore now directed chiefly against the Royalists; and the rigour with which the Jacobins had lately been treated was somewhat relaxed. The Convention, indeed, again resolved that Barère should be sent to Guiana. But this decree was not carried into effect. The prisoner, probably with the connivance of some powerful persons, made his escape from Saintes and fled to Bordeaux, where he remained in concealment during some years. There seems to have been a kind of understanding between him and the government, that, as long as he hid himself, he should not be found, but that, if he obtruded himself on the public eye, he must take the consequences of his rashness.

While the constitution of 1795, with its Executive Directory, its Council of Elders, and its Council of Five Hundred, was in operation, he continued to live under the ban of the law. It was in vain that he solicited, even at moments when the politics of the Mountain seemed to be again in the ascendant, a remission of the sentence pronounced by the Convention.

Even his fellow-regicides, even the authors of the slaughter of Vendémiaire and of the arrests of Fructidor, were ashamed of him.

About eighteen months after his escape from prison, his name was again brought before the world. In his own province he still retained some of his early popularity. He had, indeed, never been in that province since the downfall of the monarchy. The mountaineers of Gascony were far removed from the seat of government, and were but imperfectly informed of what passed there. They knew that their countryman had played an important part, and that he had on some occasions promoted their local interests; and they stood by him in his adversity and in his disgrace with a constancy which presents a singular contrast to his own abject fickleness. All France was amazed to learn that the department of the Upper Pyrenees had chosen the proscribed tyrant a member of the Council of Five Hundred. The council which, like our House of Commons, was the judge of the election of its own members, refused to admit him. When his name was read from the roll, a cry of indignation rose from the benches. "Which of you," exclaimed one of the members, "would sit by the side of such a monster?" "Not I, not I!" answered a crowd of voices. One deputy declared that he would vacate his seat if the hall were polluted by the presence of such a wretch. The election was declared null on the ground that the person elected was a criminal skulking from justice; and many severe reflections were thrown on the lenity which suffered him to be still at large.

He tried to make his peace with the Directory, by writing a bulky libel on England, entitled, The Liberty of the Seas. He seems to have confidently expected that this work would produce a great effect. He printed three thousand copies, and in order to defray the expense of publication, sold one of his farms for the sum of ten thousand francs. The book came out; but nobody bought it, in consequence, if Barère is to be believed, of the villainy of Mr Pitt, who bribed the Directory to order the Reviewers not to notice so formidable an attack on the maritime greatness of perfidious Albion.

Barère had been about three years at Bordeaux when he received intelligence that the mob of the town designed him the honour of a visit on the ninth of Thermidor, and would probably administer to him what he had, in his defence of his friend Lebon, described as substantial justice under forms a little harsh. It was necessary for him to disguise himself in clothes such as were worn by the carpenters of the dock. In this garb, with a bundle of wood shavings under his arm, he made his escape into the vineyards which surrounded the city, lurked during some days in a peasant's hut, and, when the dreaded anniversary was over, stole back into the city. A few months later he was again in danger. He now thought that he should be nowhere so safe as in the neighbourhood of Paris. He quitted Bordeaux, hastened undetected through those towns where four years before his life had been in extreme danger, passed through the capital in the morning twilight, when none were in the streets except shop-boys taking down the shutters, and arrived safe at the pleasant village of St Ouen on the Seine. Here he remained in seclusion during some months. In the meantime Bonaparte returned from Egypt, placed himself at the head of a coalition of discontented parties, covered his designs with the authority of the Elders, drove the Five Hundred out of their hall at the point of the bayonet, and became absolute monarch of France under the name of First Consul.

Barère assures us that these events almost broke his heart; that he could not bear to see France again subject to a master; and that if the representatives had been worthy of that honourable name, they would have arrested the ambitious general who insulted them. These feelings, however, did not prevent him from soliciting the protection of the new government, and from sending to the First Consul a handsome copy of the essay on the Liberty of the Seas.

The policy of Bonaparte was to cover all the past with a general oblivion. He belonged half to the Revolution and half to the reaction. He was an upstart and a sovereign; and had therefore something in common with the Jacobin, and something in common with the Royalist. All, whether Jacobins or Royalists, who were disposed to support his government, were readily received—all, whether Jacobins or Royalists, who showed hostility to his government, were put down and punished. Men who had borne a part in the worst crimes of the Reign of Terror, and men who had fought in the army of Condé, were to be found close together, both in his antechambers and in his dungeons. He decorated Fouché and Maury with the same cross. He sent Aréna and Georges Cadoudal to the same scaffold. From a government acting on such principles Barère easily obtained the indulgence which the Directory had constantly refused to grant. The sentence passed by the Convention was remitted; and he was allowed to reside at Paris. His pardon, it is true, was not granted in the most honourable form; and he remained, during some time, under the special supervision of the police. He hastened, however, to pay his court at the Luxemburg palace, where Bonaparte then resided, and was honoured with a few dry and careless words by the master of France.

Here begins a new chapter of Barère's history. What passed between him and the Consular government cannot, of course, be so accurately known to us as the speeches and reports which he made in the Convention. It is, however, not difficult, from notorious facts, and from the admissions scattered over these lying Memoirs, to form a tolerably accurate notion of what took place. Bonaparte wanted to buy Barère: Barère wanted to sell himself to Bonaparte. The only question was one of price; and there was an immense interval between what was offered and what was demanded.

Bonaparte, whose vehemence of will, fixedness of purpose, and reliance on his own genius were not only great but extravagant, looked with scorn on the most effeminate and dependent of human minds. He was quite capable of perpetrating crimes under the influence either of ambition or of revenge: but he had no touch of that accursed monomania, that craving for blood and tears, which raged in some of the Jacobin chiefs. To proscribe the Terrorists would have been wholly inconsistent with his policy; but, of all the classes of men whom his comprehensive system included, he liked them the least; and Barère was the worst of them. This wretch had been branded with infamy, first by the Convention, and then by the Council of Five Hundred. The inhabitants of four or five great cities had attempted to tear him limb from limb. Nor were his vices redeemed by eminent talents for administration or legislation. It would be unwise to place in any honourable or important post a man so wicked, so odious, and so little qualified to discharge high political duties. At the same time there was a way in which it seemed likely that he might be of use to the government. The First Consul, as he afterwards acknowledged, greatly overrated Barère's powers as a writer. The effect which the Reports of the Committee of Public Safety had produced by the camp fires of the Republican armies had been great.

Napoleon himself, when a young soldier, had been delighted by those compositions, which had much in common with the rhapsodies of his favourite poet, Macpherson. The taste, indeed, of the great warrior and statesman was never very pure. His bulletins, his general orders, and his proclamations, are sometimes, it is true, masterpieces in their kind; but we too often detect, even in his best writing, traces of Fingal, and of the Carmagnoles. It is not strange, therefore, that he should have been desirous to secure the aid of Barère's pen. Nor was this the only kind of assistance which the old member of the Committee of Public Safety might render to the Consular government. He was likely to find admission into the gloomy dens in which those Jacobins whose constancy was to be overcome by no reverse, or whose crimes admitted of no expiation, hid themselves from the curses of mankind. No enterprise was too bold or too atrocious for minds crazed by fanaticism, and familiar with misery and death. The government was anxious to have information of what passed in their secret councils; and no man was better qualified to furnish such information than Barère.

For these reasons the First Consul was disposed to employ Barère as a writer and as a spy. But Barère—was it possible that he would submit to such a degradation? Bad as he was, he had played a great part. He had belonged to that class of criminals who filled the world with the renown of their crimes; he had been one of a cabinet which had ruled France with absolute power, and made war on all Europe with signal success. Nay, he had been, though not the most powerful, yet, with the single exception of Robespierre, the most conspicuous member of that cabinet. His name had been a household word at Moscow and at Philadelphia, at Edinburgh and at Cadiz. The blood of the Queen of France, the blood of the greatest orators and philosophers of France, was on his hands. He had spoken; and it had been decreed that the plough should pass over the great city of Lyons. He had spoken again; and it had been decreed that the streets of Toulon should be razed to the ground. When depravity is placed so high as his, the hatred which it inspires is mingled with awe. His place was with great tyrants, with Critias and Sylla, with Eccelino and Borgia; not with hireling scribblers and police runners.

> "Virtue, I grant you, is an empty boast;
> But shall the dignity of vice be lost?"

So sang Pope; and so felt Barère. When it was proposed to him to publish a journal in defence of the Consular government, rage and shame inspired him for the first and last time with something like courage. He had filled as large a space in the eyes of mankind as Mr Pitt or General Washington; and he was coolly invited to descend at once to the level of Mr Lewis Goldsmith. He saw, too, with agonies of envy, that a wide distinction was made between himself and the other statesmen of the Revolution who were summoned to the aid of the government. Those statesmen were required, indeed, to make large sacrifices of principle; but they were not called on to sacrifice what, in the opinion of the vulgar, constitutes personal dignity. They were made tribunes and legislators, ambassadors and counsellors of state, ministers, senators, and consuls. They might reasonably expect to rise with the rising fortunes of their master; and, in truth, many of them were destined to wear the badge of his Legion of Honour and of his order of the Iron Crown; to be arch-chancellors and arch-treasurers, counts, dukes, and princes, Barère, only six years before, had been far more powerful, far more widely renowned, than any of them; and now, while they were thought worthy to represent the majesty of France at foreign courts, while they received crowds of suitors in gilded antechambers, he was to pass his life in measuring paragraphs, and scolding correctors of the press. It was too much. Those lips which had never before been able to fashion themselves to a No, now murmured expostulation and refusal. "I could not"—these are his own words—"abase myself to such a point as to serve the First Consul merely in the capacity of a journalist, while so many insignificant, low, and servile people, such as the Treilhards, the Rœderers, the Lebruns, the Marets, and others whom it is superfluous to name, held the first place in this government of upstarts."

This outbreak of spirit was of short duration. Napoleon was inexorable. It is said indeed that he was, for a moment, half inclined to admit Barère into the Council of State; but the members of that body remonstrated in the strongest terms, and declared that such a nomination would be a disgrace to them all. This plan was therefore relinquished. Thenceforth Barère's only chance of obtaining the patronage of the government was to subdue his pride, to forget that there had been a time when, with three words, he might have had the heads of the three consuls, and to betake himself, humbly and industriously, to the task of composing lampoons on England and panegyrics on Bonaparte.

It has been often asserted, we know not on what grounds, that Barère was employed by the government not only as a writer, but as a censor of the writings of other men. This imputation he vehemently denies in his Memoirs; but our readers will probably agree with us in thinking that his denial leaves the question exactly where it was.

Thus much is certain, that he was not restrained from exercising the office of censor by any scruple of conscience or honour; for he did accept an office, compared with which that of censor, odious as it is, may be called an august and beneficent magistracy. He began to have what are delicately called relations with the police. We are not sure that we have formed, or that we can convey, an exact notion of the nature of Barère's new calling. It is a calling unknown in our country. It has indeed often happened in England that a plot has been revealed to the government by one of the conspirators. The informer has sometimes been directed to carry it fair towards his accomplices, and to let the evil design come to full maturity. As soon as his work is done, he is generally snatched from the public gaze, and sent to some obscure village or to some remote colony. The use of spies, even to this extent, is in the highest degree unpopular in England; but a political spy by profession is a creature from which our island is as free as it is from wolves. In France the race is well known, and was never more numerous, more greedy, more cunning, or more savage, than under the government of Bonaparte.

Our idea of a gentleman in relations with the Consular and Imperial police may perhaps be incorrect. Such as it is, we will try to convey it to our readers. We image to ourselves a well-dressed person, with a soft voice and affable manners. His opinions are those of the society in which he finds himself, but a little stronger. He often complains, in the language of honest indignation, that what passes in private conversation finds its way strangely to the government, and cautions his associates to take care what they say when they are not sure of their company. As for himself, he owns that he is indiscreet. He can never refrain from speaking his mind; and that is the reason that he is not prefect of a department.

In a gallery of the Palais Royal he overhears two friends talking earnestly about the King and the Count of Artois. He follows them into a coffee-house, sits at the table next to them, calls for his half-dish and his small glass of cognac, takes up a journal, and seems occupied with the news. His neighbours go on talking without restraint, and in the style of persons warmly attached to the exiled family. They depart; and he follows them half round the boulevards till he fairly tracks them to their apartments, and learns their names from the porters. From that day every letter addressed to either of them is sent from the post-office to the police, and opened. Their correspondents become known to the government, and are carefully watched. Six or eight honest families, in different parts of France, find themselves at once under the frown of power without being able to guess what offence they have given. One person is dismissed from a public office; another learns with dismay that his promising son has been turned out of the Polytechnic school.

Next, the indefatigable servant of the state falls in with an old republican, who has not changed with the times, who regrets the red cap and the tree of liberty, who has not unlearned the Thee and Thou, and who still subscribes his letters with "Health and Fraternity." Into the ears of this sturdy politician our friend pours forth a long series of complaints. What evil times! What a change since the days when the Mountain governed France! What is the First Consul but a king under a new name? What is this Legion of Honour but a new aristocracy? The old superstition is reviving with the old tyranny. There is a treaty with the Pope, and a provision for the clergy. Emigrant nobles are returning in crowds, and are better received at the Tuileries than the men of the 10th of August. This cannot last. What is life without liberty? What terrors has death to the true patriot? The old Jacobin catches fire, bestows and receives the fraternal hug, and hints that there will soon be great news, and that the breed of Harmodius and Brutus is not quite extinct. The next day he is close prisoner, and all his papers are in the hands of the government.

To this vocation, a vocation compared with which the life of a beggar, of a pickpocket, of a pimp, is honourable, did Barère now descend. It was his constant practice, as often as he enrolled himself in a new party, to pay his footing with the heads of old friends. He was at first a Royalist; and he made atonement by watering the tree of liberty with the blood of Louis. He was then a Girondist; and he made atonement by murdering Vergniaud and Gensonné. He fawned on Robespierre up to the eighth of Thermidor; and he made atonement by moving, on the ninth, that Robespierre should be beheaded without a trial. He was now enlisted in the service of the new monarchy; and he proceeded to atone for his republican heresies by sending republican throats to the guillotine.

Among his most intimate associates was a Gascon named Demerville, who had been employed in an office of high trust under the Committee of Public Safety. This man was fanatically attached to the Jacobin system of politics, and, in conjunction with other enthusiasts of the same class, formed a design against the First Consul. A hint of this design escaped him in conversation with Barère. Barère carried the intelligence to Lannes, who commanded the Consular Guards. Demerville was arrested, tried, and beheaded; and among the witnesses who appeared against him was his friend Barère.

The account which Barère has given of these transactions is studiously confused and grossly dishonest. We think, however, that we can discern, through much falsehood and much artful obscurity, some truths which he labours to conceal. It is clear to us that the government suspected him of what the Italians call a double treason. It was natural that such a suspicion should attach to him. He had, in times not very remote, zealously preached the Jacobin doctrine, that he who smites a tyrant deserves higher praise than he who saves a citizen. Was it possible that the member of the Committee of Public Safety, the king-killer, the queen-killer, could in earnest mean to deliver his old confederates, his bosom friends, to the executioner, solely because they had planned an act which, if there were any truth in his own Carmagnoles, was in the highest degree virtuous and glorious? Was it not more probable that he was really concerned in the plot, and that the information which he gave was merely intended to lull or to mislead the police? Accordingly, spies were set on the spy. He was ordered to quit Paris, and not to come within twenty leagues till he received further orders. Nay, he ran no small risk of being sent, with some of his old friends, to Madagascar.

He made his peace, however, with the government so far, that he was not only permitted, during some years, to live unmolested, but was employed in the lowest sort of political drudgery. In the summer of 1803, while he was preparing to visit the south of France, he received a letter which deserves to be inserted. It was from Duroc, who is well known to have enjoyed a large share of Napoleon's confidence and favour.

> "The First Consul, having been informed that Citizen Barère is about to set out for the country, desires that he will stay at Paris.
>
> "Citizen Barère will every week draw up a report on the state of public opinion on the proceedings of the government, and generally on everything which, in his judgment, it will be interesting to the First Consul to learn.
>
> "He may write with perfect freedom.
>
> "He will deliver his reports under seal into General Duroc's own hand, and General Duroc will deliver them to the First Consul. But it is absolutely necessary that nobody should suspect that this species of communication takes place; and, should any such suspicion get abroad, the First Consul will cease to receive the reports of Citizen Barère.
>
> "It will also be proper that Citizen Barère should frequently insert in the journals articles tending to animate the public mind, particularly against the English."

During some years Barère continued to discharge the functions assigned to him by his master. Secret reports, filled with the talk of coffee-houses, were carried by him every week to the Tuileries. His friends assure us that he took especial pains to do all the harm in his power to the returned emigrants. It was not his fault if Napoleon was not apprised of every murmur and every sarcasm which old marquesses who had lost their estates, and old clergymen who had lost their benefices, uttered against the imperial system. M. Hippolyte Carnot, we grieve to say, is so much blinded by party spirit that he seems to reckon this dirty wickedness among his hero's titles to public esteem.

Barère was, at the same time, an indefatigable journalist and pamphleteer. He set up a paper directed against England, and called the *Mémorial Antibritannique.* He planned a work entitled, "France made great and illustrious by Napoleon." When the Imperial government was established, the old regicide made himself conspicuous even among the crowd of flatterers by the peculiar fulsomeness of his adulation. He translated into French a contemptible volume of Italian verses, entitled, "The Poetic Crown, composed on the glorious accession of Napoleon the First, by the Shepherds of Arcadia." He commenced a new series of Carmagnoles very different from those which had charmed the Mountain. The title of Emperor of the French, he said, was mean; Napoleon ought to be Emperor of Europe. King of Italy was too humble an appellation; Napoleon's style ought to be King of Kings.

But Barère laboured to small purpose in both his vocations. Neither as a writer nor as a spy was he of much use. He complains bitterly that his paper did not sell. While the *Journal des Débats*, then flourishing under the able management of Geoffroy, had a circulation of at least twenty thousand copies, the *Mémorial Antibritannique* never, in its most prosperous times, had more than fifteen hundred subscribers; and these subscribers were, with scarcely an exception, persons residing far from Paris, probably Gascons, among whom the name of Barère had not yet lost its influence.

A writer who cannot find readers generally attributes the public neglect to any cause rather than to the true one; and Barère was no exception to the general rule. His old hatred to Paris revived in all its fury. That city, he says, has no sympathy with France. No Parisian cares to subscribe to a journal which dwells on the real wants and interests of the country. To a Parisian nothing is so ridiculous as patriotism. The higher classes of the capital have always been devoted to England. A corporal from London is better received among them than a French general. A journal, therefore, which attacks England has no chance of their support.

A much better explanation of the failure of the *Mémorial* was given by Bonaparte at St Helena. "Barère," said he to Barry O'Meara, "had the reputation of being a man of talent: but I did not find him so. I employed him to write; but he did not display ability. He used many flowers of rhetoric, but no solid argument; nothing but *coglionerie* wrapped up in high-sounding language."

The truth is that, though Barère was a man of quick parts, and could do with ease what he could do at all, he had never been a good writer. In the day of his power he had been in the habit of haranguing an excitable audience on exciting topics. The faults of his style passed uncensured; for it was a time of literary as well as of civil lawlessness, and a patriot was licensed to violate the ordinary rules of composition as well as the ordinary rules of jurisprudence and of social morality. But there had now been a literary as well as a civil reaction. As there was again a throne and a court, a magistracy, a chivalry, and a hierarchy, so was there a revival of classical taste. Honour was again paid to the prose of Pascal and Massillon, and to the verse of Racine and La Fontaine. The oratory which had delighted the galleries of the Convention was not only as much out of date as the language of Villehardouin and Joinville, but was associated in the public mind with images of horror. All the peculiarities of the Anacreon of the guillotine, his words unknown to the Dictionary of the Academy, his conceits and his jokes, his Gascon idioms and his Gascon hyperboles, had become as odious as the cant of the Puritans was in England after the Restoration.

Bonaparte, who had never loved the men of the Reign of Terror, had now ceased to fear them. He was all-powerful and at the height of glory; they were weak and universally abhorred. He was a sovereign; and it is probable that he already meditated a matrimonial alliance with sovereigns. He was naturally unwilling, in his new position, to hold any intercourse with the worst class of Jacobins. Had Barère's literary assistance been important to the government, personal aversion might have yielded to considerations of policy; but there was no motive for keeping terms with a worthless man who had also proved a worthless writer. Bonaparte, therefore, gave loose to his feelings. Barère was not gently dropped, not sent into an honourable retirement, but spurned and scourged away like a troublesome dog. He had been in the habit of sending six copies of his journal on fine paper daily to the Tuileries. Instead of receiving the thanks and praises which he expected, he was drily told that the great man had ordered five copies to be sent back. Still he toiled on; still he cherished a hope that at last Napoleon would relent, and that at last some share in the honours of the state would reward so much assiduity and so much obsequiousness. He was bitterly undeceived. Under the Imperial constitution the electoral colleges of the departments did not possess the right of choosing senators or deputies, but merely that of presenting candidates. From among these candidates the emperor named members of the senate, and the senate named members of the legislative body. The inhabitants of the Upper Pyrenees were still strangely partial to Barère. In the year 1805, they were disposed to present him as a candidate for the senate. On this Napoleon expressed the highest displeasure; and the president of the electoral college was directed to tell the voters, in plain terms, that such a choice would be disgraceful to the department. All thought of naming Barère a candidate for the senate was consequently dropped. But the people of Argelès ventured to name him a candidate for the legislative body. That body was altogether destitute of weight and dignity; it was not permitted to debate; its only function was to vote in silence for whatever the government proposed. It is not easy to understand how any man who had sat in free and powerful deliberative assemblies could condescend to bear a part in such a mummery. Barère, however, was desirous of a place even in this mock legislature; and a place even in this mock legislature was refused to him. In the whole senate he had not a single vote.

Such treatment was sufficient, it might have been thought, to move the most abject of mankind to resentment. Still, however, Barère cringed and fawned on. His letters came weekly to the Tuileries till the year 1807. At length, while he was actually writing the two hundred and twenty-third of the series, a note was put into his hands. It was from Duroc, and was much more perspicuous than polite. Barère was requested to send no more of his Reports to the palace, as the Emperor was too busy to read them.

Contempt, says the Indian proverb, pierces even the shell of the tortoise; and the contempt of the Court was felt to the quick even by the callous heart of Barère. He had humbled himself to the dust; and he had humbled himself in vain. Having been eminent among the rulers of a great and victorious state, he had stooped to serve a master in the vilest capacities; and he had been told that, even in those capacities, he was not worthy of the pittance which had been disdainfully flung to him. He was now degraded below the level even of the hirelings whom the government employed in the most infamous offices. He stood idle in the market-place, not because he thought any office too infamous, but because none would hire him.

Yet he had reason to think himself fortunate; for, had all that I avowed in these Memoirs been known, he would have received very different tokens of the Imperial displeasure. We learn from himself that, while publishing daily columns of flattery on Bonaparte, and while carrying weekly budgets of calumny to the Tuileries, he was in close connection with the agents whom the Emperor Alexander, then by no means favourably disposed towards France, employed to watch all that passed at Paris; was permitted to read their secret despatches; was consulted by them as to the temper of the public mind and the character of Napoleon; and did his best to persuade them that the government was in a tottering condition, and that the new sovereign was not, as the world supposed, a great statesman and soldier. Next, Barère, still the flatterer and talebearer of the Imperial Court, connected himself in the same manner with the Spanish envoy. He owns that with that envoy he had relations which he took the greatest pains to conceal from his own government; that they met twice a day; and that their conversation chiefly turned on the vices of Napoleon, on his designs against Spain, and on the best mode of rendering those designs abortive. In truth, Barère's baseness was unfathomable. In the lowest deeps of shame he found out lower deeps. It is bad to be a sycophant; it is bad to be a spy. But even among sycophants and spies there are degrees of meanness. The vilest sycophant is he who privily slanders the master on whom he fawns; and the vilest spy is he who serves foreigners against the government of his native land.

From 1807 to 1814 Barère lived in obscurity, railing as bitterly as his craven cowardice would permit against the Imperial administration, and coming sometimes unpleasantly across the police. When the Bourbons returned, he, as might have been expected, became a royalist, and wrote a pamphlet setting forth the horrors of the system from which the Restoration had delivered France, and magnifying the wisdom and goodness which had dictated the charter. He who had voted for the death of Louis, he who had moved the decree for the trial of Marie Antoinette, he whose hatred of monarchy had led him to make war even upon the sepulchres of ancient monarchs, assures us, with great complacency, that "in this work monarchical principles and attachment to the House of Bourbon are nobly expressed." By this apostasy he got nothing, not even any additional infamy; for his character was already too black to be blackened.

During the hundred days he again emerged for a very short time into public life; he was chosen by his native district a member of the Chamber of Representatives. But, though that assembly was composed in a great measure of men who regarded the excesses of the Jacobins with indulgence, he found himself an object of general aversion. When the President first informed the Chamber that M. Barère requested a hearing, a deep and indignant murmur ran round the benches. After the battle of Waterloo, Barère proposed that the Chamber should save France from the victorious enemy, by putting forth a proclamation about the pass of Thermopylæ and the Lacedæmonian custom of wearing flowers in times of extreme danger. Whether this composition, if it had then appeared, would have stopped the English and Prussian armies, is a question respecting which we are left to conjecture. The Chamber refused to adopt this last of the Carmagnoles.

The Emperor had abdicated. The Bourbons returned. The Chamber of Representatives, after burlesquing during a few weeks the proceedings of the National Convention, retired with the well-earned character of having been the silliest political assembly that had met in France. Those dreaming pedants and praters never for a moment comprehended their position. They could never understand that Europe must be either conciliated or vanquished; that Europe could be conciliated only by the restoration of Louis, and vanquished only by means of a dictatorial power entrusted to Napoleon. They would not hear of Louis; yet they would not hear of the only measures which could keep him out. They incurred the enmity of all foreign powers by putting Napoleon at their head; yet they shackled him, thwarted him, quarrelled with him about every trifle, abandoned him on the first reverse. They then opposed declamations and disquisitions to eight hundred thousand bayonets; played at making a constitution for their country, when it depended on the indulgence of the victor whether they should have a country; and were at last interrupted, in the midst of their babble about the rights of man and the sovereignty of the people, by the soldiers of Wellington and Blucher.

A new Chamber of Deputies was elected, so bitterly hostile to the Revolution that there was no small risk of a new Reign of Terror. It is just, however, to say that the king, his ministers, and his allies exerted themselves to restrain the violence of the fanatical royalists, and that the punishments inflicted, though in our opinion unjustifiable, were few and lenient when compared with those which were demanded by M. de Labourdonnaye and M. Hyde de Neuville. We have always heard, and are inclined to believe, that the government was not disposed to treat even the regicides with severity. But on this point the feeling of the Chamber of Deputies was so strong that it was thought necessary to make some concession. It was enacted, therefore, that whoever, having voted in January 1793 for the death of Louis the Sixteenth, had in any manner given in an adhesion to the government of Bonaparte during the hundred days should be banished for life from France. Barère fell within this description. He had voted for the death of Louis; and he had sat in the Chamber of Representatives during the hundred days.

He accordingly retired to Belgium, and resided there, forgotten by all mankind, till the year 1830. After the revolution of July he was at liberty to return to France; and he fixed his residence in his native province. But he was soon involved in a succession of lawsuits with his nearest relations—"three fatal sisters and an ungrateful brother," to use his own words. Who was in the right is a question about which we have no means of judging, and certainly shall not take Barère's word. The Courts appear to have decided some points in his favour and some against him. The natural inference is, that there were faults on all sides. The result of this litigation was that the old man was reduced to extreme poverty, and was forced to sell his paternal house.

As far as we can judge from the few facts which remain to be mentioned, Barère continued Barère to the last. After his exile he turned Jacobin again, and, when he came back to France, joined the party of the extreme left in railing at Louis Philippe, and at all Louis Philippe's ministers. M. Casimir Périer, M. De Broglie, M. Guizot, and M. Thiers, in particular, are honoured with his abuse; and the King himself is held up to execration as a hypocritical tyrant. Nevertheless, Barère had no scruple about accepting a charitable donation of a thousand francs a year from the privy purse of the sovereign whom he hated and reviled. This pension, together with some small sums occasionally doled out to him by the department of the Interior, on the ground that he was a distressed man of letters, and by the department of Justice, on the ground that he had formerly held a high judicial office, saved him from the necessity of begging his bread. Having survived all his colleagues of the renowned Committee of Public Safety, and almost all his colleagues of the Convention, he died in January 1841. He had attained his eighty-sixth year.

We have now laid before our readers what we believe to be a just account of this man's life. Can it be necessary for us to add anything for the purpose of assisting their judgment of his character? If we were writing about any of his colleagues in the Committee of Public Safety, about Carnot, about Robespierre, or Saint Just, nay, even about Couthon, Collot, or Billaud, we might feel it necessary to go into a full examination of the arguments which have been employed to vindicate or to excuse the system of Terror. We could, we think, show that France was saved from her foreign enemies, not by the system of Terror, but in spite of it; and that the perils which were made the plea of the violent policy of the Mountain were to a great extent created by that very policy. We could, we think, also show that the evils produced by the Jacobin administration did not terminate when it fell; that it bequeathed a long series of calamities to France and to Europe; that public opinion, which had during two generations been constantly becoming more and more favourable to civil and religious freedom, underwent, during the days of Terror, a change of which the traces are still to be distinctly perceived. It was natural that there should be such a change, when men saw that those who called themselves the champions of popular rights had compressed into the space of twelve months more crimes than the Kings of France, Merovingian, Carlovingian, and Capetian, had perpetrated in twelve centuries. Freedom was regarded as a great delusion. Men were willing to submit to the government of hereditary princes, of fortunate soldiers, of nobles, of priests; to any government but that of philosophers and philanthropists. Hence the imperial despotism, with its enslaved press and its silent tribune, its dungeons stronger than the old Bastile, and its tribunals more obsequious than the old parliaments. Hence the restoration of the Bourbons and of the Jesuits, the Chamber of 1815 with its categories of proscription, the revival of the feudal spirit, the encroachments of the clergy, the persecution of the Protestants, the appearance of a new breed of De Montforts and Dominics in the full light of the nineteenth century. Hence the admission of France into the Holy Alliance, and the war waged by the old soldiers of the tricolor against the liberties of Spain. Hence, too, the apprehensions with which, even at the present day, the most temperate plans for widening the narrow basis of the French representation are regarded by those who are especially interested in the security of property and the maintenance of order. Half a century has not sufficed to obliterate the stain which one year of depravity and madness has left on the noblest of causes.

Nothing is more ridiculous than the manner in which writers like M. Hippolyte Carnot defend or excuse the Jacobin adminstration, while they declaim against the reaction which followed. That the reaction has produced and is still producing much evil, is perfectly true. But what produced the reaction? The spring flies up with a force proportioned to that with which it has been pressed down. The pendulum which is drawn far in one direction swings as far in the other. The joyous madness of intoxication in the evening is followed by languor and nausea on the morrow. And so, in politics, it is the sure law that every excess shall generate its opposite; nor does he deserve the name of a statesman who strikes a great blow without fully calculating the effect of the rebound, But such calculation was infinitely beyond the reach of the authors of the Reign of Terror. Violence, and more violence, blood, and more blood, made up their whole policy. In a few months these poor creatures succeeded in bringing about a reaction, of which none of them saw, and of which none of us may see the close; and, having brought it about, they marvelled at it; they bewailed it; they execrated it; they ascribed it to everything but the real cause—their own immorality and their own profound incapacity for the conduct of great affairs.

These, however, are considerations to which, on the present occasion, it is hardly necessary for us to advert; for, be the defence which has been set up for the Jacobin policy good or bad, it is a defence which cannot avail Barère. From his own life, from his own pen, from his own mouth, we can prove that the part which he took in the work of blood is to be attributed, not even to sincere fanaticism, not even to misdirected and ill-regulated patriotism, but either to cowardice, or to delight in human misery. Will it be pretended that it was from public spirit that he murdered the Girondists? In these very Memoirs he tells us that he always regarded their death as the greatest calamity that could befall France. Will it be pretended that it was from public spirit that he raved for the head of the Austrian woman? In these very Memoirs he tells us that the time spent in attacking her was ill spent, and ought to have been employed in concerting measures of national defence. Will it be pretended that he was induced by sincere and earnest abhorrence of kingly government to butcher the living and to outrage the dead; he who invited Napoleon to take the title of King of Kings, he who assures us that after the Restoration he expressed in noble language his attachment to monarchy, and to the house of Bourbon? Had he been less mean, something might have been said in extenuation of his cruelty. Had he been less cruel, something might have been said in extenuation of his meanness. But for him, regicide and court-spy, for him who patronised Lebon and betrayed Demerville, for him who wantoned alternately in gasconades of Jacobinism and gasconades of servility, what excuse has the largest charity to offer?

We cannot conclude without saying something about two parts of his character, which his biographer appears to consider as deserving of high admiration. Barère, it is admitted, was somewhat fickle; but in two things he was consistent, in his love of Christianity, and in his hatred to England. If this were so, we must say that England is much more beholden to him than Christianity.

It is possible that our inclinations may bias our judgment; but we think that we do not flatter ourselves when we say that Barère's aversion to our country was a sentiment as deep and constant as his mind was capable of entertaining. The value of this compliment is indeed somewhat diminished by the circumstance that he knew very little about us. His ignorance of our institutions, manners, and history is the less excusable, because, according to his own account, he consorted much, during the peace of Amiens, with Englishmen of note, such as that eminent nobleman Lord Greaten, and that not less eminent philosopher Mr Mackensie Cœfhis. In spite, however, of his connection with these well-known ornaments of our country, he was so ill-informed about us as to fancy that our government was always laying plans to torment him. If he was hooted at Saintes, probably by people whose relations he had murdered, it was because the cabinet of St James's had hired the mob. If nobody would read his bad books it was because the cabinet of St

James's had secured the Reviewers. His accounts of Mr Fox, of Mr Pitt, of the Duke of Wellington, of Mr Canning, swarm with blunders surpassing even the ordinary blunders committed by Frenchmen who write about England. Mr Fox and Mr Pitt, he tells us, were ministers in two different reigns. Mr Pitt's sinking fund was instituted in order to enable England to pay subsidies to the powers allied against the French republic. The Duke of Wellington's house in Hyde Park was built by the nation, which twice voted the sum of £200,000 for the purpose. This, however, is exclusive of the cost of the frescoes, which were also paid for out of the public purse. Mr Canning was the first Englishman whose death Europe had reason to lament; for the death of Lord Ward, a relation, we presume, of Lord Greaten and Mr Cœfhis, had been an immense benefit to mankind.

Ignorant, however, as Barère was, he knew enough of us to hate us; and we persuade ourselves that, had he known us better, he would have hated us more. The nation which has combined, beyond all example and all hope, the blessings of liberty with those of order, might well be an object of aversion to one who had been false alike to the cause of order and to the cause of liberty. We have had amongst us intemperate zeal for popular rights; we have had amongst us also the intemperance of loyalty. But we have never been shocked by such a spectacle as the Barère of 1794, or as the Barère of 1804. Compared with him, our fiercest demagogues have been gentle; compared with him, our meanest courtiers have been manly. Mix together Thistlewood and Bubb Doddington; and you are still far from having Barère. The antipathy between him and us is such, that neither for the crimes of his earlier nor for those of his later life does our language, rich as it is, furnish us with adequate names. We have found it difficult to relate his history without having perpetual recourse to the French vocabulary of horror, and to the French vocabulary of baseness. It is not easy to give a notion of his conduct in the Convention, without using those emphatic terms, *guillotinade*, *noyade*, *fusillade*, *mitraillade*. It is not easy to give a notion of his conduct under the Consulate and the Empire without borrowing such words as *mouchard* and *mouton*.

We therefore like his invectives against us much better than anything else that he has written; and dwell on them, not merely with complacency, but with a feeling akin to gratitude. It was but little that he could do to promote the honour of our country; but that little he did strenuously and constantly. Renegade, traitor, slave, coward, liar, slanderer, murderer, hack writer, police-spy—the one small service which he could render to England was to hate her: and such as he was may all who hate her be!

We cannot say that we contemplate with equal satisfaction that fervent and constant zeal for religion which, according to M. Hippolyte Carnot, distinguished Barère; for, as we think that whatever brings dishonour on religion is a serious evil, we had, we own, indulged a hope that Barère was an atheist. We now learn, however, that he was at no time even a sceptic, that he adhered to his faith through the whole Revolution, and that he has left several manuscript works on divinity. One of these is a pious treatise, entitled "Of Christianity, and of its Influence." Another consists of meditations on the Psalms, which will doubtless greatly console and edify the Church.

This makes the character complete. Whatsoever things are false, whatsoever things are dishonest, whatsoever things are unjust, whatsoever things are impure, whatsoever things are hateful, whatsoever things are of evil report, if there be any vice, and if there be any infamy, all these things, we knew, were blended in Barère. But one thing was still wanting; and that M. Hippolyte Carnot has supplied. When to such an assemblage of qualities a high profession of piety is added, the effect becomes overpowering. We sink under the contemplation of such exquisite and manifold perfection; and feel, with deep humility, how presumptuous it was in us to think of composing the legend of this beatified athlete of the faith, St Bertrand of the Carmagnoles.

Something more we had to say about him. But let him go. We did not seek him out, and will not keep him longer. If those who call themselves his friends had not forced him on our notice we should never have vouchsafed to him more than a passing word of scorn and abhorrence, such as we might fling at his brethren, Hébert and Fouquier Tinville, and Carrier and Lebon. We have no pleasure in seeing human nature thus degraded. We turn with disgust from the filthy and spiteful Yahoos of the fiction; and the filthiest and most spiteful Yahoo of the fiction was a noble creature when compared with the Barère of history. But what is no pleasure M. Hippolyte Carnot has made a duty. It is no light thing that a man in high and honourable public trust, a man who, from his connections and position, may not unnaturally be supposed to speak the sentiments of a large class of his countrymen, should come forward to demand approbation for a life black with every sort of wickedness, and unredeemed by a single virtue. This M. Hippolyte Carnot has done. By attempting to enshrine this Jacobin carrion, he has forced us to gibbet it; and we venture to say that, from the eminence of infamy on which we have placed it, he will not easily take it down.

CONTRIBUTIONS

TO

THE ENCYCLOPÆDIA BRITANNICA.

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FRANCIS ATTERBURY.

(DECEMBER 1853.)

FRANCIS ATTERBURY, a man who holds a conspicuous place in the political, ecclesiastical, and literary history of England, was born in the year 1662, at Middleton in Buckinghamshire, a parish of which his father was rector. Francis was educated at Westminster School, and carried thence to Christchurch a stock of learning which, though really scanty, he through life exhibited with such judicious ostentation that superficial observers believed his attainments to be immense. At Oxford, his parts, his taste, and his bold, contemptuous, and imperious spirit, soon made him conspicuous. Here he published at twenty, his first work, a translation of the noble poem of Absalom and Achitophel into Latin verse. Neither the style nor the versification of the young scholar was that of the Augustan age. In English composition he succeeded much better. In 1687 he distinguished himself among many able men who wrote in defence of the Church of England, then persecuted by James II., and calumniated by apostates who had for lucre quitted her communion. Among these apostates none was more active or malignant than Obadiah Walker, who was master of University College, and who had set up there, under the royal patronage, a press for printing tracts against the established religion. In one of these tracts, written apparently by Walker himself, many aspersions were thrown on Martin Luther. Atterbury undertook to defend the great Saxon Reformer, and performed that task in a manner singularly characteristic. Whoever examines his reply to Walker will be struck by the contrast between the feebleness of those parts which are argumentative and defensive, and the vigour of those parts which are rhetorical and aggressive. The Papists were so much galled by the sarcasms and invectives of the young polemic that they raised a cry of treason, and accused him of having, by implication, called King James a Judas.

After the Revolution, Atterbury, though bred in the doctrines of non-resistance and passive obedience, readily swore fealty to the new government. In no long time he took holy orders. He occasionally preached in London with an eloquence which raised his reputation, and soon had the honour of being appointed one of the royal chaplains. But he ordinarily resided at Oxford, where he took an active part in academical business, directed the classical studies of the undergraduates of his college, and was the chief adviser and assistant of Dean Aldrich, a divine now chiefly remembered by his catches, but renowned among his contemporaries as a scholar, a Tory, and a high-churchman. It was the practice, not a very judicious practice, of Aldrich to employ the most promising youths of his college in editing Greek and Latin books. Among the studious and well-disposed lads who were, unfortunately for themselves, induced to become teachers of philology when they should have been content to be learners, was Charles Boyle, son of the Earl of Orrery, and nephew of Robert Boyle, the great experimental philosopher. The task assigned to Charles Boyle was to prepare a new edition of one of the most worthless books in existence. It was a fashion, among those Greeks and Romans who cultivated rhetoric as an art, to compose epistles and harangues in the names of eminent men. Some of these counterfeits are fabricated with such exquisite taste and skill that it is the highest achievement of criticism to distinguish them from originals. Others are so feebly and rudely executed that they can hardly impose on an intelligent schoolboy. The best specimen which has come down to us is perhaps the oration for Marcellus, such an imitation of Tully's eloquence as Tully would himself have read with wonder and delight. The worst specimen is perhaps a collection of letters purporting to have been written by that Phalaris who governed Agrigentum more than 500 years before the Christian era. The evidence, both internal and external, against the genuineness of these letters is overwhelming. When, in the fifteenth century, they emerged, in company with much that was far more valuable, from their obscurity, they were pronounced spurious by Politian, the greatest scholar of Italy, and by Erasmus, the greatest scholar on our side of the Alps. In truth, it would be as easy to persuade an educated Englishman that one of Johnson's Ramblers was the work of William Wallace as to persuade a man like Erasmus that a pedantic exercise, composed in the trim and artificial Attic of the time of Julian, was a dispatch written by a crafty and ferocious Dorian, who roasted people alive many years before there existed a volume of prose in the Greek language. But, though Christchurch could boast of many good Latinists, of many good English writers, and of a greater number of clever and fashionable men of the world than belonged to any other academic body, there was not then in the college a single man capable of distinguishing between the infancy and the dotage of Greek literature. So superficial indeed was the learning of the rulers of this celebrated society that they were charmed by an essay which Sir William Temple published in praise of the ancient writers. It now seems strange that even the eminent public services, the deserved popularity, and the graceful style of Temple should have saved so silly a performance from universal contempt. Of the books which he most vehemently eulogised his eulogies proved that he knew nothing. In fact, he could not read a line of the language in which they were written. Among many other foolish things, he said that the letters of Phalaris were the oldest letters and also the best in the world. Whatever Temple wrote attracted notice. People who had never heard of the Epistles of Phalaris began to inquire about them. Aldrich, who knew very little Greek, took the word of Temple who knew none, and desired Boyle to prepare a new edition of these admirable compositions which, having long slept in obscurity, had become on a sudden objects of general interest.

The edition was prepared with the help of Atterbury, who was Boyle's tutor, and of some other members of the college. It was an edition such as might be expected from people who would stoop to edite such a book. The notes were worthy of the text; the Latin version worthy of the Greek original. The volume would have been forgotten in a month, had not a misunderstanding about a manuscript arisen between the young editor and the greatest scholar that had appeared in Europe since the revival of letters, Richard Bentley. The manuscript was in Bentley's keeping. Boyle wished it to be collated. A mischief-making bookseller informed him that Bentley had refused to lend it, which was false, and also that Bentley had spoken contemptuously of the letters attributed to Phalaris, and of the critics who were taken in by such counterfeits, which was perfectly true. Boyle, much provoked, paid, in his preface, a bitterly ironical compliment to Bentley's courtesy. Bentley revenged himself by a short dissertation, in which he proved that the epistles were spurious, and the new edition of them worthless: but he treated Boyle personally with civility as a young gentleman of great hopes, whose love of learning was highly commendable, and who deserved to have had better instructors.

Few things in literary history are more extraordinary than the storm which this little dissertation raised. Bentley had treated Boyle with forbearance; but he had treated Christchurch with contempt; and the Christchurch-men, wherever dispersed, were as much attached to their college as a Scotchman to his country, or a Jesuit to his order. Their influence was great. They were dominant at Oxford, powerful in the Inns of Court and in the College of Physicians, conspicuous in Parliament and in the literary and fashionable circles of London. Their unanimous cry was, that the honour of the college must be vindicated, that the insolent Cambridge pedant must be put down. Poor Boyle was unequal to the task, and disinclined to it. It was, therefore, assigned to his tutor, Atterbury.

The answer to Bentley, which bears the name of Boyle, but which was, in truth, no more the work of Boyle than the letters to which the controversy related were the work of Phalaris, is now read only by the curious, and will in all probability never be reprinted again. But it had its day of noisy popularity. It was to be found, not only in the studies of men of letters, but on the tables of the most brilliant drawing-rooms of Soho Square and Covent Garden. Even the beaus and coquettes of that age, the Wildairs and the Lady Lurewells, the Mirabells and the Millaments, congratulated each other on the way in which the gay young gentleman, whose erudition sate so easily upon him, and who wrote with so much pleasantry and good breeding about the Attic dialect and the anapæstic measure, Sicilian talents and Thericlean cups, had bantered the queer prig of a doctor. Nor was the applause of the multitude undeserved. The book is, indeed, Atterbury's masterpiece, and gives a higher notion of his powers than any of those works to which he put his name. That he was altogether in the wrong on the main question, and on all the collateral questions springing out of it, that his knowledge of the language, the literature, and the history of Greece was not equal to what many freshmen now bring up every year to Cambridge and Oxford, and that some of his blunders seem rather to deserve a flogging than a refutation, is true; and therefore it is that his performance is, in the highest degree, interesting and valuable to a judicious reader. It is good by reason of its exceeding badness. It is the most extraordinary instance that exists of the art of making much show with little substance. There is no difficulty, says the steward of Molière's miser, in giving a fine dinner with plenty of money: the really great cook is he who can set out a banquet with no money at all. That Bentley should have written excellently on ancient chronology and geography, on the development of the Greek language, and the origin of the Greek drama, is not strange. But that Atterbury should, during some years, have been thought to have treated these subjects much better than Bentley is strange indeed. It is true that the champion of Christchurch had all the help which the most celebrated members of that society could give him. Smalridge contributed some very good wit; Friend and others some very bad archæology and philology. But the greater part of the volume was entirely Atterbury's: what was not his own was revised and retouched by him: and the whole bears the mark of his mind, a mind inexhaustibly rich in all the resources of controversy, and familiar with all the artifices which make falsehood look like truth, and ignorance like knowledge. He had little gold; but he beat that little out to the very thinnest leaf, and spread it over so vast a surface that to those who judged by a glance, and who did not resort to balances and tests, the glittering heap of worthless matter which he produced seemed to be an inestimable treasure of massy bullion. Such arguments as he had he placed in the clearest light. Where he had no arguments, he resorted to personalities, sometimes serious, generally ludicrous, always clever and cutting. But, whether he was grave or merry, whether he reasoned or sneered, his style was always pure, polished, and easy.

Party spirit then ran high; yet, though Bentley ranked among Whigs, and Christchurch was a stronghold of Toryism, Whigs joined with Tories in applauding Atterbury's volume. Garth insulted Bentley, and extolled Boyle in lines which are now never quoted except to be laughed at. Swift, in his "Battle of the Books," introduced with much pleasantry Boyle, clad in armour, the gift of all the gods, and directed by Apollo in the form of a human friend, for whose name a blank is left which may easily be filled up. The youth, so accoutred, and so assisted, gains an easy victory over his uncourteous and boastful antagonist. Bentley, meanwhile, was supported by the consciousness of an immeasurable superiority, and encouraged by the voices of the few who were really competent to judge the combat. "No man," he said, justly and nobly, "was ever written down but by himself." He spent two years in preparing a reply, which will never cease to be read and prized while the literature of ancient Greece is studied in any part of the world. This reply proved, not only that the letters ascribed to Phalaris were spurious, but that Atterbury, with all his wit, his eloquence, his skill in controversial fence, was the most audacious pretender that ever wrote about what he did not understand. But to Atterbury this exposure was matter of indifference. He was now engaged in a dispute about matters far more important and exciting than the laws of Zaleucus and the laws of Charondas. The rage of religious factions was extreme. High church and Low church divided the nation. The great majority of the clergy were on the high-church side; the majority of King William's bishops were inclined to latitudinarianism. A dispute arose between the two parties touching the extent of the powers of the Lower House of Convocation. Atterbury thrust himself eagerly into the front rank of the high-churchmen. Those who take a comprehensive and impartial view of his whole career will not be disposed to give him credit for religious zeal. But it was his nature to be vehement and pugnacious in the cause of every fraternity of which he was a member. He had defended the genuineness of a spurious book simply because Christchurch had put forth an edition of that book; he now stood up for the clergy against the civil power, simply because he was a clergyman, and for the priests against the episcopal order, simply because he was as yet only a priest. He asserted the pretensions of the class to which he belonged in several treatises written with much wit, ingenuity, audacity, and acrimony. In this, as in his first controversy, he was opposed to antagonists whose knowledge of the subject in dispute was far superior to his; but in this, as in his first controversy, he imposed on the multitude by bold assertion, by sarcasm, by declamation, and, above all, by his peculiar knack of exhibiting a little erudition in such a manner as no make it look like a great deal. Having passed himself off on the world as a greater master of classical learning than Bentley, he now passed himself off as a greater master of ecclesiastical learning than Wake or Gibson. By the great body of the clergy he was regarded as the ablest and most intrepid tribune that had ever defended their rights against the oligarchy of prelates. The lower House of Convocation voted him thanks for his services; the University of Oxford created him a doctor of divinity; and soon after the accession of Anne, while the Tories still had the chief weight in the government, he was promoted to the deanery of Carlisle.

Soon after he had obtained this preferment, the Whig party rose to ascendency in the state. From that party he could expect no favour. Six years elapsed before a change of fortune took place. At length, in the year 1710, the prosecution of Sacheverell produced a formidable explosion of high-church fanaticism. At such a moment Atterbury could not fail to be conspicuous. His inordinate zeal for the body to which he belonged, his turbulent and aspiring temper, his rare talents for agitation and for controversy, were again signally displayed. He bore a chief part in framing that artful and eloquent speech which the accused divine pronounced at the bar of the Lords, and which presents a singular contrast to the absurd and scurrilous sermon which had very unwisely been honoured with impeachment. During the troubled and anxious months which followed the trial, Atterbury was among the most active of those pamphleteers who inflamed the nation against the Whig ministry and the Whig parliament. When the ministry had been changed and the parliament dissolved, rewards were showered upon him. The Lower House of Convocation elected him prolocutor. The Queen appointed him Dean of Christchurch on the death of his old friend and patron Aldrich. The college would have preferred a gentler ruler. Nevertheless, the new head was received with every mark of honour. A congratulatory oration in Latin was addressed to him in the magnificent vestibule of the hall; and he in reply professed the warmest attachment to the venerable house in which he had been educated, and paid many gracious compliments to those over whom he was to preside. But it was not in his nature to be a mild or an equitable governor. He had left the chapter of Carlisle distracted by quarrels. He found Christchurch at peace; but in three months his despotic and contentious temper did at Christchurch what it had done at Carlisle. He was succeeded in both his deaneries by the humane and accomplished Smalridge, who gently complained of the state in which both had been left. "Atterbury goes before, and sets everything on fire. I come after him with a bucket of water." It was said by Atterbury's enemies that he was made a bishop because he was so bad a dean. Under his administration Christchurch was in confusion, scandalous altercations took place, opprobrious words were exchanged; and there was reason to fear that the great Tory college would be ruined by the tyranny of the great Tory doctor. He was soon removed to the bishopric of Rochester, which was then always united with the deanery of Westminster. Still higher dignities seemed to be before him. For, though there were many able men on the episcopal bench, there was none who equalled or approached him in parliamentary talents. Had his party continued in power, it is not improbable that he would have been raised to the archbishopric of Canterbury. The more splendid his prospects, the more reason he had to dread the accession of a family which was well known to be partial to the Whigs. There is every reason to believe that he was one of those politicians who hoped that they might be able, during the life of Anne, to prepare matters in such a way that at her decease there might be little difficulty in setting aside the Act of Settlement and placing the Pretender on the throne. Her sudden death confounded the projects of these conspirators. Atterbury, who wanted no kind of courage, implored his confederates to proclaim James III., and offered to accompany the heralds in lawn sleeves. But he found even the bravest soldiers of his party irresolute, and exclaimed, not, it is said, without interjections which ill became the mouth of a father of the church, that the best of all causes and the most precious of all moments had been pusillanimously thrown away. He acquiesced in what he could not prevent, took the oaths to the House of Hanover, and at the coronation officiated with the outward show of zeal, and did his best to ingratiate himself with the royal family. But his servility was requited with cold contempt. No creature is so revengeful as a proud man who has humbled himself in vain. Atterbury became the most factious and pertinacious of all the opponents of the government. In the House of Lords his oratory, lucid, pointed, lively, and set off with every grace of pronunciation and of gesture, extorted the attention and admiration even of a hostile majority. Some of the most remarkable protests which appear in the journals of the peers were drawn up by him; and in some of the bitterest of those pamphlets which called on the English to stand up for their country against the aliens who had come from beyond the seas to oppress and plunder her, critics easily detected his style. When the rebellion of 1715 broke out, he refused to sign the paper in which the bishops of the province of Canterbury declared their attachment to the Protestant succession. He busied himself in electioneering, especially at Westminster, where, as dean, he possessed great influence; and was, indeed, strongly suspected of having once set on a riotous mob to prevent his Whig fellow-citizens from polling.

After having been long in indirect communication with the exiled family, he, in 1717, began to correspond directly with the Pretender. The first letter of the correspondence is extant. In that letter Atterbury boasts of having, during many years past, neglected no opportunity of serving the Jacobite cause. "My daily prayer," he says, "is that you may have success. May I live to see that day, and live no longer than I do what is in my power to forward it." It is to be remembered that he who wrote thus was a man bound to set to the church of which he was overseer an example of strict probity; that he had repeatedly sworn allegiance to the House of Brunswick; that he had assisted in placing the crown on the head of George I., and that he had abjured James III., "without equivocation or mental reservation, on the true faith of a Christian."

It is agreeable to turn from his public to his private life. His turbulent spirit, wearied with faction and treason, now and then required repose, and found it in domestic endearments, and in the society of the most illustrious of the living and of the dead. Of his wife little is known : but between him and his daughter there was an affection singularly close and tender. The gentleness of his manners when he was in the company of a few friends was such as seemed hardly credible to those who knew him only by his writings and speeches. The charm of his "softer hour" has been commemorated by one of those friends in imperishable verse. Though Atterbury's classical attainments were not great, his taste in English literature was excellent ; and his admiration of genius was so strong that it overpowered even his political and religious antipathies. His fondness for Milton, the mortal enemy of the Stuarts and of the church, was such as to many Tories seemed a crime. On the sad night on which Addison was laid in the chapel of Henry VII., the Westminster boys remarked that Atterbury read the funeral service with a peculiar tenderness and solemnity. The favourite companions, however, of the great Tory prelate were, as might have been expected, men whose politics had at least a tinge of Toryism. He lived on friendly terms with Swift, Arbuthnot, and Gay. With Prior he had a close intimacy, which some misunderstanding about public affairs at last dissolved. Pope found in Atterbury, not only a warm admirer, but a most faithful, fearless, and judicious adviser. The poet was a frequent guest at the episcopal palace among the elms of Bromley, and entertained not the slightest suspicion that his host, now declining in years, confined to an easy chair by gout, and apparently devoted to literature, was deeply concerned in criminal and perilous designs against the government.

The spirit of the Jacobites had been cowed by the events of 1715. It revived in 1721. The failure of the South Sea project, the panic in the money market, the downfall of great commercial houses, the distress from which no part of the kingdom was exempt, had produced general discontent. It seemed not improbable that at such a moment an insurrection might be successful. An insurrection was planned. The streets of London were to be barricaded ; the Tower and the Bank were to be surprised ; King George, his family, and his chief captains and councillors, were to be arrested ; and King James was to be proclaimed. The design became known to the Duke of Orleans, regent of France, who was on terms of friendship with the House of Hanover. He put the English government on its guard. Some of the chief malecontents were committed to prison ; and among them was Atterbury. No bishop of the Church of England had been taken into custody since that memorable day when the applauses and prayers of all London had followed the seven bishops to the gate of the Tower. The Opposition entertained some hope that it might be possible to excite among the people an enthusiasm resembling that of their fathers, who rushed into the waters of the Thames to implore the blessing of Sancroft. Pictures of the heroic confessor in his cell were exhibited at the shop windows. Verses in his praise were sung about the streets. The restraints by which he was prevented from communicating with his accomplices were represented as cruelties worthy of the dungeons of the Inquisition. Strong appeals were made to the priesthood. Would they tamely permit so gross an insult to be offered to their cloth? Would they suffer the ablest, the most eloquent member of their profession, the man who had so often stood up for their rights against the civil power, to be treated like the vilest of mankind?

There was considerable excitement; but it was allayed by a temperate and artful letter to the clergy, the work, in all probability, of Bishop Gibson, who stood high in the favour of Walpole, and shortly after became minister for ecclesiastical affairs.

Atterbury remained in close confinement during some months. He had carried on his correspondence with the exiled family so cautiously that the circumstantial proofs of his guilt, though sufficient to produce entire moral conviction, were not sufficient to justify legal conviction. He could be reached only by a bill of pains and penalties. Such a bill the Whig party, then decidedly predominant in both houses, was quite prepared to support. Many hot-headed members of that party were eager to follow the precedent which had been set in the case of Sir John Fenwick, and to pass an act for cutting off the bishop's head. Cadogan, who commanded the army, a brave soldier, but a headstrong politician, is said to have exclaimed with great vehemence: "Fling him to the lions in the Tower." But the wiser and more humane Walpole was always unwilling to shed blood; and his influence prevailed. When Parliament met, the evidence against the bishop was laid before committees of both house. Those committees reported that his guilt was proved. In the Commons a resolution, pronouncing him a traitor, was carried by nearly two to one. A bill was then introduced which provided that he should be deprived of his spiritual dignities, that he should be banished for life, and that no British subject should hold any intercourse with him except by the royal permission.

This bill passed the Commons with little difficulty. For the bishop, though invited to defend himself, chose to reserve his defence for the assembly of which he was a member. In the Lords the contest was sharp. The young Duke of Wharton, distinguished by his parts, his dissoluteness, and his versatility, spoke for Atterbury with great effect; and Atterbury's own voice was heard for the last time by that unfriendly audience which had so often listened to him with mingled aversion and delight. He produced few witnesses; nor did those witnesses say much that could be of service to him. Among them was Pope. He was called to prove that, while he was an inmate of the palace at Bromley, the bishop's time was completely occupied by literary and domestic matters, and that no leisure was left for plotting. But Pope, who was quite unaccustomed to speak in public, lost his head, and, as he afterwards owned, though he had only ten words to say, made two or three blunders.

The bill finally passed the Lords by eighty-three votes to forty-three. The bishops, with a single exception, were in the majority. Their conduct drew on them a sharp taunt from Lord Bathurst, a warm friend of Atterbury and a zealous Tory. "The wild Indians," he said, "give no quarter, because they believe that they shall inherit the skill and prowess of every adversary whom they destroy. Perhaps the animosity of the right reverend prelates to their brother may be explained in the same way."

Atterbury took leave of those whom he loved with a dignity and tenderness worthy of a better man. Three fine lines of his favourite poet were often in his mouth:—

> "Some natural tears he dropped, but wiped them soon:
> The world was all before him, where to chuse
> His place of rest, and Providence his guide."

At parting he presented Pope with a Bible, and said, with a disingenuousness of which no man who had studied the Bible to much purpose would have been guilty: "If ever you learn that I have any dealings with the Pretender, I give you leave to say that my punishment is just." Pope at this time really believed the bishop to be an injured man. Arbuthnot seems to have been of the same opinion. Swift, a few months later, ridiculed with great bitterness, in the "Voyage to Laputa," the evidence which had satisfied the two Houses of Parliament. Soon, however, the most partial friends of the banished prelate ceased to assert his innocence, and contented themselves with lamenting and excusing what they could not defend. After a short stay at Brussels, he had taken up his abode at Paris, and had become the leading man among the Jacobite refugees who were assembled there. He was invited to Rome by the Pretender, who then held his mock court under the immediate protection of the Pope. But Atterbury felt that a bishop of the Church of England would be strangely out of place at the Vatican, and declined the invitation. During some months, however, he might flatter himself that he stood high in the good graces of James. The correspondence between the master and the servant was constant. Atterbury's merits were warmly acknowledged; his advice was respectfully received; and he was, as Bolingbroke had been before him, the prime minister of a king without a kingdom. But the new favourite found, as Bolingbroke had found before him, that it was quite as hard to keep the shadow of power under a vagrant and mendicant prince as to keep the reality of power at Westminster. Though James had neither territories nor revenues, neither army nor navy, there was more faction and more intrigue among his courtiers than among those of his successful rival. Atterbury soon perceived that his counsels were disregarded, if not distrusted. His proud spirit was deeply wounded. He quitted Paris, fixed his residence at Montpellier, gave up politics, and devoted himself entirely to letters. In the sixth year of his exile he had so severe an illness that his daughter, herself in very delicate health, determined to run all risks that she might see him once more. Having obtained a license from the English Government, she went by sea to Bordeaux, but landed there in such a state that she could travel only by boat or in a litter. Her father, in spite of his infirmities, set out from Montpellier to meet her; and she, with the impatience which is often the sign of approaching death, hastened towards him. Those who were about her in vain implored her to travel slowly. She said that every hour was precious, that she only wished to see her papa and to die. She met him at Toulouse, embraced him, received from his hand the sacred bread and wine, and thanked God that they had passed one day in each other's society before they parted for ever. She died that night.

It was some time before even the strong mind of Atterbury recovered from this cruel blow. As soon as he was himself again he became eager for action and conflict; for grief, which disposes gentle natures to retirement, to inaction, and to meditation, only makes restless spirits more restless. The Pretender, dull and bigoted as he was, had found out that he had not acted wisely in parting with one who, though a heretic, was, in abilities and accomplishments, the foremost man of the Jacobite party. The bishop was courted back, and was without much difficulty induced to return to Paris and to become once more the phantom minister of a phantom monarchy. But his long and troubled life was drawing to a close. To the last, however, his intellect retained all its keenness and vigour. He learned, in the ninth year of his banishment, that he had been accused by Oldmixon, as dishonest and malignant a scribbler as any that has been saved from oblivion by the Dunciad, of having, in concert with other Christchurchmen, garbled Clarendon's History of the Rebellion. The charge, as respected Atterbury, had not the slightest foundation: for he was not one of the editors of the History, and never saw it till it was printed. He published a short vindication of himself, which is a model in its kind, luminous, temperate, and dignified. A copy of this little work he sent to the Pretender, with a letter singularly eloquent and graceful. It was impossible, the old man said, that he should write anything on such a subject without being reminded of the resemblance between his own fate and that of Clarendon. They were the only two English subjects that had ever been banished from their country and debarred from all communication with their friends by act of parliament. But here the resemblance ended. One of the exiles had been so happy as to bear a chief part in the restoration of the Royal house. All that the other could now do was to die asserting the rights of that house to the last. A few weeks after this letter was written Atterbury died. He had just completed his seventieth year.

His body was brought to England, and laid, with great privacy, under the nave of Westminster Abbey. Only three mourners followed the coffin. No inscription marks the grave. That the epitaph with which Pope honoured the memory of his friend does not appear on the walls of the great national cemetery is no subject of regret: for nothing worse was ever written by Colley Cibber.

Those who wish for more complete information about Atterbury may easily collect it from his sermons and his controversial writings, from the report of the parliamentary proceedings against him, which will be found in the State Trials, from the five volumes of his correspondence, edited by Mr Nichols, and from the first volume of the Stuart papers, edited by Mr Glover. A very indulgent but a very interesting account of the bishop's political career will be found in Lord Mahon's valuable History of England.

JOHN BUNYAN.

(MAY 1854.)

JOHN BUNYAN, the most popular religious writer in the English language, was born at Elstow, about a mile from Bedford, in the year 1628. He may be said to have been born a tinker. The tinkers then formed an hereditary caste, which was held in no high estimation. They were generally vagrants and pilferers, and were often confounded with the gipsies, whom in truth they nearly resembled. Bunyan's father was more respectable than most of the tribe. He had a fixed residence, and was able to send his son to a village school where reading and writing were taught.

The years of John's boyhood were those during which the puritan spirit was in the highest vigour all over England; and nowhere had that spirit more influence than in Bedfordshire. It is not wonderful, therefore, that a lad to whom nature had given a powerful imagination, and sensibility which amounted to a disease, should have been early haunted by religious terrors. Before he was ten, his sports were interrupted by fits of remorse and despair; and his sleep was disturbed by dreams of fiends trying to fly away with him. As he grew older, his mental conflicts became still more violent. The strong language in which he described them has strangely misled all his biographers except Mr Southey. It has long been an ordinary practice with pious writers to cite Bunyan as an instance of the supernatural power of divine grace to rescue the human soul from the lowest depths of wickedness. He is called in one book the most notorious of profligates; in another, the brand plucked from the burning. He is designated in Mr Ivimey's History of the Baptists as the depraved Bunyan, the wicked tinker of Elstow. Mr Ryland, a man once of great note among the Dissenters, breaks out into the following rhapsody :—"No man of common sense and common integrity can deny that Bunyan was a practical atheist, a worthless contemptible infidel, a vile rebel to God and goodness, a common profligate, a soul-despising, a soul-murdering, a soul-damning, thoughtless wretch as could exist on the face of the earth. Now be astonished, O heavens, to eternity! and wonder, O earth and hell! while time endures. Behold this very man become a miracle of mercy, a mirror of wisdom, goodness, holiness, truth, and love." But whoever takes the trouble to examine the evidence will find that the good men who wrote this had been deceived by a phraseology which, as they had been hearing it and using it all their lives, they ought to have understood better. There cannot be a greater mistake than to infer, from the strong expressions in which a devout man bemoans his exceeding sinfulness, that he has led a worse life than his neighbours. Many excellent persons, whose moral character from boyhood to old age has been free from any stain discernible to their fellow-creatures, have, in their autobiographies and diaries, applied to themselves, and doubtless with sincerity, epithets as severe as could be applied to Titus Oates or Mrs Brownrigg. It is quite certain that Bunyan was, at eighteen, what, in any but the most austerely puritanical circles, would have been considered as a young man of singular gravity and innocence. Indeed, it may be remarked that he, like many other penitents who, in general terms, acknowledged themselves to have been the worst of mankind, fired up and stood vigorously on his defence, whenever any particular charge was brought against him by others. He declares, it is true, that he had let loose the reins on the neck of his lusts, that he had delighted in all transgressions against the divine law, and that he had been the ringleader of the youth of Elstow in all manner of vice. But, when those who wished him ill accused him of licentious amours, he called on God and the angels to attest his purity. No woman, he said, in heaven, earth, or hell, could charge him with having ever made any improper advances to her. Not only had he been strictly faithful to his wife; but he had even before his marriage, been perfectly spotless. It does not appear from his own confessions, or from the railings of his enemies, that he ever was drunk in his life. One bad habit he contracted, that of using profane language; but he tells us that a single reproof cured him so effectually that he never offended again. The worst that can be laid to the charge of this poor youth, whom it has been the fashion to represent as the most desperate of reprobates, as a village Rochester, is that he had a great liking for some diversions, quite harmless in themselves, but condemned by the rigid precisians among whom he lived, and for whose opinion he had a great respect. The four chief sins of which he was guilty were dancing, ringing the bells of the parish church, playing at tipcat, and reading the history of Sir Bevis of Southampton. A rector of the school of Laud would have held such a young man up to the whole parish as a model. But Bunyan's notions of good and evil had been learned in a very different school; and he was made miserable by the conflict between his tastes and his scruples.

When he was about seventeen, the ordinary course of his life was interrupted by an event which gave a lasting colour to his thoughts. He enlisted in the parliamentary army, and served during the decisive campaign of 1645. All that we know of his military career is that, at the siege of Leicester, one of his comrades, who had taken his post, was killed by a shot from the town. Bunyan ever after considered himself as having been saved from death by the special interference of Providence. It may be observed that his imagination was strongly impressed by the glimpse which he had caught of the pomp of war. To the last he loved to draw his illustrations of sacred things from camps and fortresses, from guns, drums, trumpets, flags of truce, and regiments arrayed, each under its own banner. His Greatheart, his Captain Boanerges, and his Captain Credence, are evidently portraits, of which the originals were among those martial saints who fought and expounded in Fairfax's army.

In a few months Bunyan returned home and married. His wife had some pious relations, and brought him as her only portion some pious books. And now his mind, excitable by nature, very imperfectly disciplined by education, and exposed, without any protection, to the infectious virulence of the enthusiasm which was then epidemic in England, began to be fearfully disordered. In outward things he soon became a strict Pharisee. He was constant in attendance at prayers and sermons. His favourite amusements were one after another relinquished, though not without many painful struggles. In the middle of a game at tipcat he paused, and stood staring wildly upwards with his stick in his hand. He had heard a voice asking him whether he would leave his sins and go to heaven, or keep his sins and go to hell; and he had seen an awful countenance frowning on him from the sky. The odious vice of bellringing he renounced; but he still for a time ventured to go to the church tower and look on while others pulled the ropes. But soon the thought struck him that, if he persisted in such wickedness, the steeple would fall on his head; and he fled in terror from the accursed place. To give up dancing on the village green was still harder; and some months elapsed before he had the fortitude to part with this darling sin. When this last sacrifice had been made, he was, even when tried by the maxims of that austere time, faultless. All Elstow talked of him as an eminently pious youth. But his own mind was more unquiet than ever. Having nothing more to do in the way of visible reformation, yet finding in religion no pleasures to supply the place of the juvenile amusements which he had relinquished, he began to apprehend that he lay under some special malediction; and he was tormented by a succession of fantasies which seemed likely to drive him to suicide or to Bedlam.

At one time he took it into his head that all persons of Israelite blood would be saved, and tried to make out that he partook of that blood; but his hopes were speedily destroyed by his father, who seems to have had no ambition to be regarded as a Jew.

At another time Bunyan was disturbed by a strange dilemma: "If I have not faith, I am lost; if I have faith, I can work miracles." He was tempted to cry to the puddles between Elstow and Bedford, "Be ye dry," and to stake his eternal hopes on the event.

Then he took up a notion that the day of grace for Bedford and the neighbouring villages was past: that all who were to be saved in that part of England were already converted; and that he had begun to pray and strive some months too late.

Then he was harassed by doubts whether the Turks were not in the right, and the Christians in the wrong. Then he was troubled by a maniacal impulse which prompted him to pray to the trees, to a broomstick, to the parish bull. As yet, however, he was only entering the Valley of the Shadow of Death. Soon the darkness grew thicker. Hideous forms floated before him. Sounds of cursing and wailing were in his ears. His way ran through stench and fire, close to the mouth of the bottomless pit. He began to be haunted by a strange curiosity about the unpardonable sin, and by a morbid longing to commit it. But the most frightful of all the forms which his disease took was a propensity to utter blasphemy, and especially to renounce his share in the benefits of the redemption. Night and day, in bed, at table, at work, evil spirits, as he imagined, were repeating close to his ear the words, "Sell him, sell him." He struck at the hobgoblins; he pushed them from him; but still they were ever at his side. He cried out in answer to them, hour after hour: "Never, never; not for thousands of worlds; not for thousands." At length, worn out by this long agony, he suffered the fatal words to escape him, "Let him go, if he will." Then his misery became more fearful than ever. He had done what could not be forgiven. He had forfeited his part of the great sacrifice. Like Esau, he had sold his birthright; and there was no longer any place for repentance. "None," he afterwards wrote, "knows the terrors of those days but myself." He has described his sufferings with singular energy, simplicity, and pathos. He envied the brutes; he envied the very stones in the street, and the tiles on the houses. The sun seemed to withhold its light and warmth from him. His body, though cast in a sturdy mould, and though still in the highest vigour of youth, trembled whole days together with the fear of death and judgment. He fancied that this trembling was the sign set on the worst reprobates, the sign which God had put on Cain. The unhappy man's emotion destroyed his power of digestion. He had such pains that he expected to burst asunder like Judas, whom he regarded as his prototype.

Neither the books which Bunyan read, nor the advisers whom he consulted, were likely to do much good in a case like his. His small library had received a most unseasonable addition, the account of the lamentable end of Francis Spira. One ancient man of high repute for piety, whom the sufferer consulted, gave an opinion which might well have produced fatal consequences. "I am afraid," said Bunyan, "that I have committed the sin against the Holy Ghost." "Indeed," said the old fanatic, "I am afraid that you have."

At length the clouds broke; the light became clearer and clearer; and the enthusiast, who had imagined that he was branded with the mark of the first murderer, and destined to the end of the arch traitor, enjoyed peace and a cheerful confidence in the mercy of God. Years elapsed, however, before his nerves, which had been so perilously overstrained, recovered their tone. When he had joined a Baptist society at Bedford, and was for the first time admitted to partake of the Eucharist, it was with difficulty that he could refrain from imprecating destruction on his brethren while the cup was passing from hand to hand. After he had been some time a member of the congregation, he began to preach; and his sermons produced a powerful effect. He was indeed illiterate; but he spoke to illiterate men. The severe training through which he had passed had given him such an experimental knowledge of all the modes of religious melancholy as he could never have gathered from books; and his vigorous genius, animated by a fervent spirit of devotion, enabled him, not only to exercise a great influence over the vulgar, but even to extort the half contemptuous admiration of scholars. Yet it was long before he ceased to be tormented by an impulse which urged him to utter words of horrible impiety in the pulpit.

Counter-irritants are of as great use in moral as in physical diseases. It should seem that Bunyan was finally relieved from the internal sufferings which had embittered his life by sharp persecution from without. He had been five years a preacher, when the Restoration put it in the power of the Cavalier gentlemen and clergymen all over the country to oppress the Dissenters; and of all the Dissenters whose history is known to us, he was perhaps the most hardly treated. In November 1660, he was flung into Bedford gaol; and there he remained, with some intervals of partial and precarious liberty, during twelve years. His persecutors tried to extort from him a promise that he would abstain from preaching; but he was convinced that he was divinely set apart and commissioned to be a teacher of righteousness; and he was fully determined to obey God rather than man. He was brought before several tribunals, laughed at, caressed, reviled, menaced, but in vain. He was facetiously told that he was quite right in thinking that he ought not to hide his gift; but that his real gift was skill in repairing old kettles. He was compared to Alexander the coppersmith. He was told that, if he would give up preaching, he should be instantly liberated. He was warned that, if he persisted in disobeying the law, he would be liable to banishment, and that, if he were found in England after a certain time his neck would be stretched. His answer was, "If you let me out to-day, I will preach again to-morrow." Year after year he lay patiently in a dungeon, compared with which the worse prison now to be found in the island is a palace. His fortitude is the more extraordinary, because his domestic feelings were unusually strong. Indeed, he was considered by his stern brethren as somewhat too fond and indulgent a parent. He had several small children, and among them a daughter who was blind, and whom he loved with peculiar tenderness. He could not, he said, bear even to let the wind blow on her; and now she must suffer cold and hunger; she must beg; she must be beaten; "yet," he added, "I must, I must do it." While he lay in prison he could do nothing in the way of his old trade for the support of his family. He determined, therefore, to take up a new trade. He learned to make long tagged thread laces; and many thousands of these articles were furnished by him to the hawkers. While his hands were thus busied, he had other employment for his mind and his lips. He gave religious instruction to his fellow-captives, and formed from among them a little flock, of which he was himself the pastor. He studied indefatigably the few books which he possessed. His two chief companions were the Bible and Fox's Book of Martyrs. His knowledge of the Bible was such that he might have been called a living concordance; and on the margin of his copy of the Book of Martyrs are still legible the ill spelt lines of doggrel in which he expressed his reverence for the brave sufferers, and his implacable enmity to the mystical Babylon.

At length he began to write; and though it was some time before he discovered where his strength lay, his writings were not unsuccessful. They were coarse, indeed; but they showed a keen mother wit, a great command of the homely mother tongue, an intimate knowledge of the English Bible, and a vast and dearly-bought spiritual experience. They therefore, when the corrector of the press had improved the syntax and the spelling, were well received by the humbler class of Dissenters.

Much of Bunyan's time was spent in controversy. He wrote sharply against the Quakers, whom he seems always to have held in utter abhorrence. It is, however, a remarkable fact that he adopted one of their peculiar fashions: his practice was to write, not November or December, but eleventh month and twelfth month.

He wrote against the liturgy of the Church of England. No two things, according to him, had less affinity than the form of prayer and the spirit of prayer. Those, he said with much point, who have most of the spirit of prayer are all to be found in gaol; and those who have most zeal for the form of prayer are all to be found at the alehouse. The doctrinal articles, on the other hand, he warmly praised, and defended against some Arminian clergymen who had signed them. The most acrimonious of all his works is his answer to Edward Fowler, afterwards Bishop of Gloucester, an excellent man, but not free from the taint of Pelagianism.

Bunyan had also a dispute with some of the chiefs of the sect to which he belonged. He doubtless held with perfect sincerity the distinguishing tenet of that sect; but he did not consider that tenet as one of high importance, and willingly joined in communion with quiet Presbyterians and Independents. The sterner Baptists, therefore, loudly pronounced him a false brother. A controversy arose which long survived the original combatants. In our own time the cause which Bunyan had defended with rude logic and rhetoric against Kiffin and Danvers was pleaded by Robert Hall with an ingenuity and eloquence such as no polemical writer has ever surpassed.

During the years which immediately followed the Restoration, Bunyan's confinement seems to have been strict. But, as the passions of 1660 cooled, as the hatred with which the Puritans had been regarded while their reign was recent gave place to pity, he was less and less harshly treated. The distress of his family, and his own patience, courage, and piety softened the hearts of his persecutors. Like his own Christian in the cage, he found protectors even among the crowd of Vanity Fair. The bishop of the diocese, Dr Barlow, is said to have interceded for him. At length the prisoner was suffered to pass most of his time beyond the walls of the gaol, on condition, as it should seem, that he remained within the town of Bedford.

He owed his complete liberation to one of the worst acts of one of the worst governments that England has ever seen. In 1671 the Cabal was in power. Charles II. had concluded the treaty by which he bound himself to set up the Roman Catholic religion in England. The first step which he took towards that end was to annul, by an unconstitutional exercise of his prerogative, all the penal statutes against the Roman Catholics; and, in order to disguise his real design, he annulled at the same time the penal statutes against Protestant nonconformists. Bunyan was consequently set at large. In the first warmth of his gratitude he published a tract in which he compared Charles to that humane and generous Persian king who, though not himself blest with the light of the true religion, favoured the chosen people, and permitted them, after years of captivity, to rebuild their beloved temple. To candid men, who consider how much Bunyan had suffered, and how little he could guess the secret designs of the court, the unsuspicious thankfulness with which he accepted the precious boon of freedom will not appear to require any apology.

Before he left his prison he had begun the book which has made his name immortal. The history of that book is remarkable. The author was, as he tells us, writing a treatise, in which he had occasion to speak of the stages of the Christian progress. He compared that progress, as many others had compared it, to a pilgrimage. Soon his quick wit discovered innumerable points of similarity which had escaped his predecessors. images came crowding on his mind faster than he could put them into words, quagmires and pits, steep hills, dark and horrible glens, soft vales, sunny pastures, a gloomy castle of which the courtyard was strewn with the skulls and bones of murdered prisoners, a town all bustle and splendour, like London on the Lord Mayor's Day, and the narrow path, straight as a rule could make it, running on up hill and down hill, through city and through wilderness, to the Black River and the Shining Gate. He had found out, as most people would have said, by accident, as he would doubtless have said, by the guidance of Providence, where his powers lay. He had no suspicion, indeed, that he was producing a masterpiece. He could not guess what place his allegory would occupy in English literature; for of English literature he knew nothing. Those who suppose him to have studied the Fairy Queen might easily be confuted, if this were the proper place for a detailed examination of the passages in which the two allegories have been thought to resemble each other. The only work of fiction, in all probability, with which he could compare his Pilgrim, was his old favourite, the legend of Sir Bevis of Southampton. He would have thought it a sin to borrow any time from the serious business of his life, from his expositions, his controversies, and his lace tags, for the purpose of amusing himself with what he considered merely as a trifle. It was only, he assures us, at spare moments that he returned to the House Beautiful, the Delectable Mountains, and the Enchanted Ground. He had no assistance. Nobody but himself saw a line, till the whole was complete. He then consulted his pious friends. Some were pleased. Others were much scandalised. It was a vain story, a mere romance, about giants, and lions, and goblins, and warriors, sometimes fighting with monsters and sometimes regaled by fair ladies in stately palaces. The loose atheistical wits at Will's might write such stuff to divert the painted Jezebels of the court: but did it become a minister of the gospel to copy the evil fashions of the world? There had been a time when the cant of such fools would have made Bunyan miserable. But that time was passed; and his mind was now in a firm and healthy state. He saw that, in employing fiction to make truth clear and goodness attractive, he was only following the example which every Christian ought to propose to himself; and he determined to print.

The *Pilgrim's Progress* stole silently into the world. Not a single copy of the first edition is known to be in existence. The year of publication has not been ascertained. It is probable that, during some months, the little volume circulated only among poor and obscure sectaries. But soon the irresistible charm of a book which gratified the imagination of the reader with all the action and scenery of a fairy tale, which exercised his ingenuity by setting him to discover a multitude of curious analogies, which interested his feelings for human beings, frail like himself, and struggling with temptations from within and from without, which every moment drew a smile from him by some stroke of quaint yet simple pleasantry, and nevertheless left on his mind a sentiment of reverence for God and of sympathy for man, began to produce its effect. In puritanical circles, from which plays and novels were strictly excluded, that effect was such as no work of genius, though it were superior to the Iliad, to Don Quixote, or to Othello, can ever produce on a mind accustomed to indulge in literary luxury. In 1678 came forth a second edition with additions; and then the demand became immense. In the four following years the book was reprinted six times. The eighth edition, which contains the last improvements made by the author, was published in 1682, the ninth in 1684, the tenth in 1685. The help of the engraver had early been called in; and tens of thousands of children looked with terror and delight on execrable copper plates, which represented Christian thrusting his sword into Apollyon, or writhing in the grasp of Giant Despair. In Scotland, and in some of the colonies, the Pilgrim was even more popular than in his native country. Bunyan has told us, with very pardonable vanity, that in New England his dream was the daily subject of the conversation of thousands, and was thought worthy to appear in the most superb binding. He had numerous admirers in Holland, and among the Huguenots of France. With the pleasures, however, he experienced some of the pains of eminence. Knavish booksellers put forth volumes of trash under his name; and envious scribblers maintained it to be impossible that the poor ignorant tinker should really be the author of the book which was called his.

He took the best way to confound both those who counterfeited him and those who slandered him. He continued to work the gold-field which he had discovered, and to draw from it new treasures, not indeed with quite such ease and in quite such abundance as when the precious soil was still virgin, but yet with success which left all competition far behind. In 1684 appeared the second part of the "Pilgrim's Progress." It was soon followed by the "Holy War," which, if the "Pilgrim's Progress" did not exist, would be the best allegory that ever was written.

Bunyan's place in society was now very different from what it had been. There had been a time when many Dissenting ministers, who could talk Latin and read Greek, had affected to treat him with scorn. But his fame and influence now far exceeded theirs. He had so great an authority among the Baptists that he was popularly called Bishop Bunyan. His episcopal visitations were annual. From Bedford he rode every year to London, and preached there to large and attentive congregations. From London he went his circuit through the country, animating the zeal of his brethren, collecting and distributing alms, and making up quarrels. The magistrates seem in general to have given him little trouble. But there is reason to believe that, in the year 1685, he was in some danger of again occupying his old quarters in Bedford gaol. In that year the rash and wicked enterprise of Monmouth gave the Government a pretext for persecuting the Nonconformists; and scarcely one eminent divine of the Presbyterian, Independent, or Baptist persuasion remained unmolested. Baxter was in prison: Howe was driven into exile: Henry was arrested. Two eminent Baptists, with whom Bunyan had been engaged in controversy, were in great peril and distress. Danvers was in danger of being hanged; and Kiffin's grandsons were actually hanged. The tradition is that, during those evil days, Bunyan was forced to disguise himself as a waggoner, and that he preached to his congregation at Bedford in a smoke-frock, with a cart-whip in his hand. But soon a great change took place. James the Second was at open war with the Church, and found it necessary to court the Dissenters. Some of the creatures of the government tried to secure the aid of Bunyan. They probably knew that he had written in praise of the indulgence of 1672, and therefore hoped that he might be equally pleased with the indulgence of 1687. But fifteen years of thought, observation, and commerce with the world had made him wiser. Nor were the cases exactly parallel. Charles was a professed Protestant: James was a professed Papist. The object of Charles's indulgence was disguised; the object of James's indulgence was patent. Bunyan was not deceived. He exhorted his hearers to prepare themselves by fasting and prayer for the danger which menaced their civil and religious liberties, and refused even to speak to the courtier who came down to remodel the corporation of Bedford, and who, as was supposed, had it in charge to offer some municipal dignity to the Bishop of the Baptists.

Bunyan did not live to see the Revolution. In the summer of 1688 he undertook to plead the cause of a son with an angry father, and at length prevailed on the old man not to disinherit the young one. This good work cost the benevolent intercessor his life. He had to ride through heavy rain. He came drenched to his lodgings on Snow Hill, was seized with a violent fever, and died in a few days. He was buried in Bunhill Fields; and the spot where he lies is still regarded by the Nonconformists with a feeling which seems scarcely in harmony with the stern spirit of their theology. Many Puritans, to whom the respect paid by Roman Catholics to the reliques and tombs of saints seemed childish or sinful, are said to have begged with their dying breath that their coffins might be placed as near as possible to the office of the author of the "Pilgrim's Progress."

The fame of Bunyan during his life, and during the century which followed his death, was indeed great, but was almost entirely confined to religious families of the middle and lower classes. Very seldom was he during that time mentioned with respect by any writer of great literary eminence. Young coupled his prose with the poetry of the wretched D'Urfey. In the Spiritual Quixote, the adventures of Christian are ranked with those of Jack the Giant-Killer and John Hickathrift. Cowper ventured to praise the great allegorist, but did not venture to name him. It is a significant circumstance that, till a recent period, all the numerous editions of the "Pilgrim's Progress" were evidently meant for the cottage and the servants' hall. The paper, the printing, the plates, were all of the meanest description. In general, when the educated minority and the common people differ about the merit of a book, the opinion of the educated minority finally prevails. The "Pilgrim's Progress" is perhaps the only book about which, after the lapse of a hundred years, the educated minority has come over to the opinion of the common people.

The attempts which have been made to improve and to imitate this book are not to be numbered. It has been done into verse: it has been done into modern English. "The Pilgrimage of Tender Conscience," "The Pilgrimage of Good Intent," "The Pilgrimage of Seek Truth," "The Pilgrimage of Theophilus," "The Infant Pilgrim," "The Hindoo Pilgrim," are among the many feeble copies of the great original. But the peculiar glory of Bunyan is that those who most hated his doctrines have tried to borrow the help of his genius. A Catholic version of his parable may be seen with the head of the Virgin in the title-page. On the other hand, those Antinomians for whom his Calvinism is not strong enough may study the pilgrimage of Hephzibah, in which nothing will be found which can be construed into an admission of free agency and universal redemption. But the most extraordinary of all the acts of Vandalism by which a fine work of art was ever defaced was committed so late as the year 1853. It was determined to transform the "Pilgrim's Progress" into a Tractarian book. The task was not easy: for it was necessary to make the two sacraments the most prominent objects in the allegory; and of all Christian theologians, avowed Quakers excepted, Bunyan was the one in whose system the sacraments held the least prominent place. However, the Wicket Gate became a type of Baptism, and the House Beautiful of the Eucharist. The effect of this change is such as assuredly the ingenious person who made it never contemplated. For, as not a single pilgrim passes through the Wicket Gate in infancy, and as Faithful hurries past the House Beautiful without stopping, the lesson which the fable in its altered shape teaches, is that none but adults ought to be baptised, and that the Eucharist may safely be neglected. Nobody would have discovered from the original "Pilgrim's Progress" that the author was not a Pædobaptist. To turn his book into a book against Pædobaptism was an achievement reserved for an Anglo-Catholic divine. Such blunders must necessarily be committed by every man who mutilates parts of a great work, without taking a comprehensive view of the whole.

OLIVER GOLDSMITH.

(FEBRUARY 1856.)

OLIVER GOLDSMITH, one of the most pleasing English writers of the eighteenth century. He was of a Protestant and Saxon family which had been long settled in Ireland, and which had, like most other Protestant and Saxon families, been, in troubled times, harassed and put in fear by the native population. His father, Charles Goldsmith, studied in the reign of Queen Anne at the diocesan school of Elphin, became attached to the daughter of the schoolmaster, married her, took orders, and settled at a place called Pallas in the county of Longford. There he with difficulty supported his wife and children on what he could earn, partly as a curate and partly as a farmer.

At Pallas Oliver Goldsmith was born in November 1728. That spot was then, for all practical purposes, almost as remote from the busy and splendid capital in which his later years were passed, as any clearing in Upper Canada or any sheep-walk in Australasia now is. Even at this day those enthusiasts who venture to make a pilgrimage to the birthplace of the poet are forced to perform the latter part of their journey on foot. The hamlet lies far from any high road, on a dreary plain which, in wet weather, is often a lake. The lanes would break any jaunting car to pieces; and there are ruts and sloughs through which the most strongly built wheels cannot be dragged.

While Oliver was still a child, his father was presented to a living worth about £200 a year, in the county of Westmeath. The family accordingly quitted their cottage in the wilderness for a spacious house on a frequented road, near the village of Lissoy. Here the boy was taught his letters by a maid-servant, and was sent in his seventh year to a village school kept by an old quartermaster on half-pay, who professed to teach nothing but reading, writing, and arithmetic, but who had an inexhaustible fund of stories about ghosts, banshees, and fairies, about the great Rapparee chiefs, Baldearg O'Donnell and galloping Hogan, and about the exploits of Peterborough and Stanhope, the surprise of Monjuich, and the glorious disaster of Brihuega. This man must have been of the Protestant religion; but he was of the aboriginal race, and not only spoke the Irish language, but could pour forth unpremeditated Irish verses. Oliver early became, and through life continued to be, a passionate admirer of the Irish music, and especially of the compositions of Carolan, some of the last notes of whose harp he heard. It ought to be added that Oliver, though by birth one of the Englishry, and though connected by numerous ties with the Established Church, never showed the least sign of that contemptuous antipathy with which, in his days, the ruling minority in Ireland too generally regarded the subject majority. So far indeed was he from sharing in the opinions and feelings of the caste to which he belonged, that he conceived an aversion to the Glorious and Immortal Memory, and, even when George the Third was on the throne, maintained that nothing but the restoration of the banished dynasty could save the country.

From the humble academy kept by the old soldier Goldsmith was removed in his ninth year. He went to several grammar schools, and acquired some knowledge of the ancient languages. His life at this time seems to have been far from happy. He had, as appears from the admirable portrait of him at Knowle, features harsh even to ugliness. The small-pox had set its mark on him with more than usual severity. His stature was small, and his limbs ill put together. Among boys little tenderness is shown to personal defects; and the ridicule excited by poor Oliver's appearance was heightened by a peculiar simplicity and a disposition to blunder which he retained to the last. He became the common butt of boys and masters, was pointed at as a fright in the play-ground, and flogged as a dunce in the school-room. When he had risen to eminence, those who had once derided him ransacked their memory for the events of his early years, and recited repartees and couplets which had dropped from him, and which, though little noticed at the time, were supposed, a quarter of a century later, to indicate the powers which produced the "Vicar of Wakefield" and the "Deserted Village."

In his seventeenth year Oliver went up to Trinity College, Dublin, as a sizar. The sizars paid nothing for food and tuition, and very little for lodging; but they had to perform some menial services from which they have long been relieved. They swept the court: they carried up the dinner to the fellows' table, and changed the plates and poured out the ale of the rulers of the society. Goldsmith was quartered, not alone, in a garret, on the window of which his name, scrawled by himself, is still read with interest.* From such garrets many men of less parts than his have made their way to the woolsack or to the episcopal bench. But Goldsmith, while he suffered all the humiliations, threw away all the advantages, of his situation. He neglected the studies of the place, stood low at the examinations, was turned down to the bottom of his class for playing the buffoon in the lecture-room, was severely reprimanded for pumping on a constable, and was caned by a brutal tutor for giving a ball in the attic story of the college to some gay youths and damsels from the city.

While Oliver was leading at Dublin a life divided between squalid distress and squalid dissipation, his father died, leaving a mere pittance. The youth obtained his bachelor's degree, and left the university. During some time the humble dwelling to which his widowed mother had retired was his home. He was now in his twenty-first year; it was necessary that he should do something; and his education seemed to have fitted him to do nothing but to dress himself in gaudy colours, of which he was as fond as a magpie, to take a hand at cards, to sing Irish airs, to play the flute, to angle in summer, and to tell ghost stories by the fire in winter. He tried five or six professions in turn without success. He applied for ordination; but, as he applied in scarlet clothes, he was speedily turned out of the episcopal palace. He then became tutor in an opulent family, but soon quitted his situation in consequence of a dispute about play. Then he determined to emigrate to America. His relations, with much satisfaction, saw him set out for Cork on a good horse with thirty pounds in his pocket. But in six weeks he came back on a miserable hack, without a penny, and informed his mother that the ship in which he had taken his passage, having got a fair wind while he was at a party of pleasure, had sailed without him. Then he resolved to study the law. A generous kinsman advanced fifty pounds. With this sum Goldsmith went to Dublin, was enticed into a gaming house, and lost every shilling. He then thought of medicine. A small purse was made up; and in his twenty-fourth year he was sent to Edinburgh. At Edinburgh he passed eighteen months in nominal attendance on lectures, and picked up some superficial information about chemistry and natural history. Thence he went to Leyden, still pretending to study physic. He left that celebrated university, the third university at which he had resided, in his twenty-seventh year, without a degree, with the merest smattering of medical knowledge, and with no property but his clothes and his flute. His flute, however, proved a useful friend. He rambled on foot through Flanders, France, and Switzerland, playing tunes which everywhere set the peasantry dancing, and which often procured for him a supper and a bed. He wandered as far as Italy. His musical performances, indeed, were not to the taste of the Italians; but he contrived to live on the alms which he obtained at the gates of the convents. It should, however, be observed that the stories which he told about this part of his life ought to be received with great caution; for strict veracity was never one of his virtues; and a man who is ordinarily inaccurate in narration is likely to be more than ordinarily inaccurate when he talks about his own travels. Goldsmith, indeed, was so regardless of truth as to assert in print that he was present at a most interesting conversation between Voltaire and Fontenelle, and that this conversation took place at Paris. Now it is certain that Voltaire never was within a hundred leagues of Paris during the whole time which Goldsmith passed on the Continent.

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* The glass on which the name is written has, as we are informed by a writer in *Notes and Queries* (2d S. ix. p. 91), been inclosed in a frame and deposited in the Manuscript Room of the College Library, where it is still to be seen.

In 1756 the wanderer landed at Dover, without a shilling, without a friend, and without a calling. He had, indeed, if his own unsupported evidence may be trusted, obtained from the University of Padua a doctor's degree; but this dignity proved utterly useless to him. In England his flute was not in request: there were no convents; and he was forced to have recourse to a series of desperate expedients. He turned strolling player; but his face and figure were ill suited to the boards even of the humblest theatre. He pounded drugs and ran about London with phials for charitable chemists. He joined a swarm of beggars, which made its nest in Axe Yard. He was for a time usher of a school, and felt the miseries and humiliations of this situation so keenly that he thought it a promotion to be permitted to earn his bread as a bookseller's hack; but he soon found the new yoke more galling than the old one, and was glad to become an usher again. He obtained a medical appointment in the service of the East India Company; but the appointment was speedily revoked. Why it was revoked we are not told. The subject was one on which he never liked to talk. It is probable that he was incompetent to perform the duties of the place. Then he presented himself at Surgeon's Hall for examination, as mate to a naval hospital. Even to so humble a post he was found unequal. By this time the schoolmaster whom he had served for a morsel of food and the third part of a bed was no more. Nothing remained but to return to the lowest drudgery of literature. Goldsmith took a garret in a miserable court, to which he had to climb from the brink of Fleet Ditch by a dizzy ladder of flagstones called Breakneck Steps. The court and the ascent have long disappeared; but old Londoners will remember both.* Here, at thirty, the unlucky adventurer sat down to toil like a galley slave.

In the succeeding six years he sent to the press some things which have survived and many which have perished. He produced articles for reviews, magazines, and newspapers; children's books which, bound in gilt paper and adorned with hideous woodcuts, appeared in the window of the once far-famed shop at the corner of Saint Paul's Churchyard; "An Inquiry into the State of Polite Learning in Europe," which, though of little or no value, is still reprinted among his works; a "Life of Beau Nash," which is not reprinted, though it well deserves to be so;† a superficial and incorrect, but very readable, "History of England," in a series of letters purporting to be addressed by a nobleman to his son; and some very lively and amusing "Sketches of London Society," in a series of letters purporting to be addressed by a Chinese traveller to his friends. All these works were anonymous; but some of them were well known to be Goldsmith's; and he gradually rose in the estimation of the booksellers for whom he drudged. He was, indeed, emphatically a popular writer. For accurate research or grave disquisition he was not well qualified by nature or by education. He knew nothing accurately: his reading had been desultory; nor had he meditated deeply on what he had read. He had seen much of the world; but he had noticed and retained little more of what he had seen than some grotesque incidents and characters which had happened to strike his fancy. But, though his mind was very scantily stored with materials, he used what materials he had in such a way as to produce a wonderful effect. There have been many greater writers; but perhaps no writer was ever more uniformly agreeable. His style was always pure and easy, and, on proper occasions, pointed and energetic. His narratives were always amusing, his descriptions always picturesque, his humour rich and joyous, yet not without an occasional tinge of amiable sadness. About everything that he wrote, serious or sportive, there was a certain natural grace and decorum, hardly to be expected from a man a great part of whose life had been passed among thieves and beggars, street-walkers and merry andrews, in those squalid dens which are the reproach of great capitals.

As his name gradually became known, the circle of his acquaintance widened. He was introduced to Johnson, who was then considered as the first of living English writers; to Reynolds, the first of English painters; and to Burke, who had not yet entered parliament, but had distinguished himself greatly by his writings and by the eloquence of his conversation. With these eminent men Goldsmith became intimate. In 1763 he was one of the nine original members of that celebrated fraternity which has sometimes been called the Literary Club, but which has always disclaimed that epithet, and still glories in the simple name of The Club.

By this time Goldsmith had quitted his miserable dwelling at the top of Breakneck Steps, and had taken chambers in the more civilised region of the Inns of Court. But he was still often reduced to pitiable shifts. Towards the close of 1764 his rent was so long in arrear that his landlady one morning called in the help of a sheriff's officer. The debtor, in great perplexity, despatched a messenger to Johnson; and Johnson, always friendly, though often surly, sent back the messenger with a guinea, and promised to follow speedily. He came, and found that Goldsmith had changed the guinea, and was railing at the landlady over a bottle of Madeira. Johnson put the cork into the bottle, and entreated his friend to consider calmly how money was to be procured. Goldsmith said that he had a novel ready for the press. Johnson glanced at the manuscript, saw that there were good things in it, took it to a bookseller, sold it for £60, and soon returned with the money. The rent was paid; and the sheriff's officer withdrew. According to one story, Goldsmith gave his landlady a sharp reprimand for her treatment of him; according to another, he insisted on her joining him in a bowl of punch. Both stories are probably true. The novel which was thus ushered into the world was the "Vicar of Wakefield."

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* A gentleman, who states that he has known the neighbourhood for thirty years, corrects this account, and informs the present publisher that the Breakneck Steps, thirty-two in number, divided into two flights, are still in existence, and that, according to tradition, Goldsmith's house was not on the steps, but was the first house at the head of the court, on the left hand, going from the Old Bailey. See *Notes and Queries* (2d S. ix. 280).

† Mr Black has pointed out that this is inaccurate: the life of Nash has been twice reprinted; once in Mr Prior's edition (vol. iii. p. 249), and once in Mr Cunningham's edition (vol. iv. p. 35).

But, before the "Vicar of Wakefield" appeared in print, came the great crisis of Goldsmith's literary life. In Christmas week, 1764, he published a poem, entitled the "Traveller." It was the first work to which he had put his name; and it at once raised him to the rank of a legitimate English classic. The opinion of the most skilful critics was, that nothing finer had appeared in verse since the fourth book of the "Dunciad." In one respect the "Traveller" differs from all Goldsmith's other writings. In general his designs were bad, and his execution good. In the "Traveller," the execution, though deserving of much praise, is far inferior to the design. No philosophical poem, ancient or modern, has a plan so noble, and at the same time so simple. An English wanderer, seated on a crag among the Alps, near the point where three great countries meet, looks down on the boundless prospect, reviews his long pilgrimage, recalls the varieties of scenery, of climate, of government, of religion, of national character, which he has observed, and comes to the conclusion, just or unjust, that our happiness depends little on political institutions, and much on the temper and regulation of our own minds.

While the fourth edition of the "Traveller" was on the counters of the booksellers, the "Vicar of Wakefield" appeared, and rapidly obtained a popularity which has lasted down to our own time, and which is likely to last as long as our language. The fable is indeed one of the worst that ever was constructed. It wants, not merely that probability which ought to be found in a tale of common English life, but that consistency which ought to be found even in the wildest fiction about witches, giants, and fairies. But the earlier chapters have all the sweetness of pastoral poetry, together with all the vivacity of comedy. Moses and his spectacles, the vicar and his monogamy, the sharper and his cosmogony, the squire proving from Aristotle that relatives are related, Olivia preparing herself for the arduous task of converting a rakish lover by studying the controversy between Robinson Crusoe and Friday, the great ladies with their scandal about Sir Tomkyn's amours and Dr Burdock's verses, and Mr Burchell with his "Fudge," have caused as much harmless mirth as has ever been caused by matter packed into so small a number of pages. The latter part of the tale is unworthy of the beginning. As we approach the catastrophe, the absurdities lie thicker and thicker; and the gleams of pleasantry become rarer and rarer.

The success which had attended Goldsmith as a novelist emboldened him to try his fortune as a dramatist. He wrote the "Goodnatured Man," a piece which had a worse fate than it deserved. Garrick refused to produce it at Drury Lane. It was acted at Covent Garden in 1768, but was coldly received. The author, however, cleared by his benefit nights, and by the sale of the copyright, no less than £500, five times as much as he had made by the "Traveller" and the "Vicar of Wakefield" together. The plot of the "Goodnatured Man" is, like almost all Goldsmith's plots, very ill constructed. But some passages are exquisitely ludicrous; much more ludicrous, indeed, than suited the taste of the town at that time. A canting, mawkish play, entitled "False Delicacy," had just had an immense run. Sentimentality was all the mode. During some years, more tears were shed at comedies than at tragedies; and a pleasantry which moved the audience to anything more than a grave smile was reprobated as low. It is not strange, therefore, that the very best scene in the "Goodnatured Man," that in which Miss Richland finds her lover attended by the bailiff and the bailiff's follower in full court dresses, should have been mercilessly hissed, and should have been omitted after the first night.

In 1770 appeared the "Deserted Village." In mere diction and versification this celebrated poem is fully equal, perhaps superior, to the "Traveller;" and it is generally preferred to the "Traveller" by that large class of readers who think, with Bayes in the "Rehearsal," that the only use of a plan is to bring in fine things. More discerning judges, however, while they admire the beauty of the details, are shocked by one unpardonable fault which pervades the whole. The fault we mean is not that theory about wealth and luxury which has so often been censured by political economists. The theory is indeed false: but the poem, considered merely as a poem, is not necessarily the worse on that account. The finest poem in the Latin language, indeed the finest didactic poem in any language, was written in defence of the silliest and meanest of all systems of natural and moral philosophy. A poet may easily be pardoned for reasoning ill; but he cannot be pardoned for describing ill, for observing the world in which he lives so carelessly that his portraits bear no resemblance to the originals, for exhibiting as copies from real life monstrous combinations of things which never were and never could be found together. What would be thought of a painter who should mix August and January in one landscape, who should introduce a frozen river into a harvest scene? Would it be a sufficient defence of such a picture to say that every part was exquisitely coloured, that the green hedges, the apple-trees loaded with fruit, the waggons reeling under the yellow sheaves, and the sun-burned reapers wiping their foreheads, were very fine, and that the ice and the boys sliding were also very fine? To such a picture the "Deserted Village" bears a great resemblance. It is made up of incongruous parts. The village in its happy days is a true English village. The village in its decay is an Irish village. The felicity and the misery which Goldsmith has brought close together belong to two different countries; and to two different stages in the progress of society. He had assuredly never seen in his native island such a rural paradise, such a seat of plenty, content, and tranquillity, as his "Auburn." He had assuredly never seen in England all the inhabitants of such a paradise turned out of their homes in one day and forced to emigrate in a body to America. The hamlet he had probably seen in Kent; the ejectment he had probably seen in Munster: but, by joining the two, he has produced something which never was and never will be seen in any part of the world.

In 1773 Goldsmith tried his chance at Covent Garden with a second play, "She Stoops to Conquer." The manager was not without great difficulty induced to bring this piece out. The sentimental comedy still reigned; and Goldsmith's comedies were not sentimental. The "Good-natured Man" had been too funny to succeed; yet, the mirth of the "Good-natured Man" was sober when compared with the rich drollery of "She Stoops to Conquer," which is, in truth, an incomparable farce in five acts. On this occasion, however, genius triumphed. Pit, boxes, and galleries, were in a constant roar of laughter. If any bigoted admirer of Kelly and Cumberland ventured to hiss or groan, he was speedily silenced by a general cry of "turn him out," or "throw him over." Two generations have since confirmed the verdict which was pronounced on that night.

While Goldsmith was writing the "Deserted Village," and "She Stoops to Conquer," he was employed on works of a very different kind, works from which he derived little reputation but much profit. He compiled for the use of schools a "History of Rome," by which he made £300, a "History of England," by which he made £600, a "History of Greece," for which he received £250, a "Natural History," for which the booksellers covenanted to pay him 800 guineas. These works he produced without any elaborate research, by merely selecting, abridging, and translating into his own clear, pure, and flowing language what he found in books well known to the world, but too bulky or too dry for boys and girls. He committed some strange blunders; for he knew nothing with accuracy. Thus in his "History of England," he tells us that Naseby is in Yorkshire; nor did he correct this mistake when the book was reprinted. He was very nearly hoaxed into putting into the "History of Greece" an account of a battle between Alexander the Great and Montezuma. In his "Animated Nature" he relates, with faith and with perfect gravity, all the most absurd lies which he could find in books of travels about gigantic Patagonians, monkeys that preach sermons, nightingales that repeat long conversations. "If he can tell a horse from a cow," said Johnson, "that is the extent of his knowledge of zoology." How little Goldsmith was qualified to write about the physical sciences is sufficiently proved by two anecdotes. He on one occasion denied that the sun is longer in the northern than in the southern signs. It was vain to cite the authority of Maupertuis. "Maupertuis!" he cried, "I understand those matters better than Maupertuis." On another occasion he, in defiance of the evidence of his own senses, maintained obstinately, and even angrily, that he chewed his dinner by moving his upper jaw.

Yet, ignorant as Goldsmith was, few writers have done more to make the first steps in the laborious road to knowledge easy and pleasant. His compilations are widely distinguished from the compilations of ordinary book-makers. He was a great, perhaps an unequalled, master of the arts of selection and condensation. In these respects his histories of Rome and of England, and still more his own abridgments of these histories, well deserve to be studied. In general nothing is less attractive than an epitome: but the epitomes of Goldsmith, even when most concise, are always amusing; and to read them is considered by intelligent children, not as a task, but as a pleasure.

Goldsmith might now be considered as a prosperous man. He had the means of living in comfort, and even in what to one who had so often slept in barns and on bulks must have been luxury. His fame was great and was constantly rising. He lived in what was intellectually far the best society of the kingdom, in a society in which no talent or accomplishment was wanting, and in which the art of conversation was cultivated with splendid success. There probably were never four talkers more admirable in four different ways than Johnson, Burke, Beauclerk, and Garrick; and Goldsmith was on terms of intimacy with all the four. He aspired to share in their colloquial renown; but never was ambition more unfortunate. It may seem strange that a man who wrote with so much perspicuity, vivacity, and grace, should have been, whenever he took a part in conversation, an empty, noisy, blundering rattle. But on this point the evidence is overwhelming. So extraordinary was the contrast between Goldsmith's published works and the silly things which he said, that Horace Walpole described him as an inspired idiot. "Noll," said Garrick, "wrote like an angel, and talked like poor Poll." Chamier declared that it was a hard exercise of faith to believe that so foolish a chatterer could have really written the "Traveller." Even Boswell could say, with contemptuous compassion, that he liked very well to hear honest Goldsmith run on. "Yes, sir," said Johnson, "but he should not like to hear himself." Minds differ as rivers differ. There are transparent and sparkling rivers from which it is delightful to drink as they flow; to such rivers the minds of such men as Burke and Johnson may be compared. But there are rivers of which the water when first drawn is turbid and noisome, but becomes pellucid as crystal, and delicious to the taste, if it be suffered to stand till it has deposited a sediment; and such a river is a type of the mind of Goldsmith. His first thoughts on every subject were confused even to absurdity; but they required only a little time to work themselves clear. When he wrote they had that time; and therefore his readers pronounced him a man of genius: but when he talked he talked nonsense, and made himself the laughing-stock of his hearers. He was painfully sensible of his inferiority in conversation; he felt every failure keenly; yet he had not sufficient judgment and self-command to hold his tongue. His animal spirits and vanity were always impelling him to try to do the one thing which he could not do. After every attempt he felt that he had exposed himself, and writhed with shame and vexation; yet the next moment he began again.

His associates seem to have regarded him with kindness, which, in spite of their admiration of his writings, was not unmixed with contempt. In truth, there was in his character much to love, but very little to respect. His heart was soft even to weakness: he was so generous that he quite forgot to be just: he forgave injuries so readily that he might be said to invite them; and was so liberal to beggars that he had nothing left for his tailor and his butcher. He was vain, sensual, frivolous, profuse, improvident. One vice of a darker shade was imputed to him, envy. But there is not the least reason to believe that this bad passion, though it sometimes made him wince and utter fretful exclamations, ever impelled him to injure by wicked arts the reputation of any of his rivals. The truth probably is, that he was not more envious, but merely less prudent, than his neighbours. His heart was on his lips. All those small jealousies, which are but too common among men of letters, but which a man of letters who is also a man of the world does his best to conceal, Goldsmith avowed with the simplicity of a child. When he was envious, instead of affecting indifference, instead of damning with faint praise, instead of doing injuries slily and in the dark, he told everybody that he was envious. "Do not, pray, do not talk of Johnson in such terms," he said to Boswell; "you harrow up my very soul." George Steevens and Cumberland were men far too cunning to say such a thing. They would have echoed the praises of the man whom they envied, and then have sent to the newspapers anonymous libels upon him. Both what was good and what was bad in Goldsmith's character was to his associates a perfect security that he would never commit such villany. He was neither ill natured enough, nor long headed enough, to be guilty of any malicious act which required contrivance and disguise.

Goldsmith has sometimes been represented as a man of genius, cruelly treated by the world, and doomed to struggle with difficulties which at last broke his heart. But no representation can be more remote from the truth. He did, indeed, go through much sharp misery before he had done anything considerable in literature. But, after his name had appeared on the title-page of the "Traveller," he had none but himself to blame for his distresses. His average income, during the last seven years of his life, certainly exceeded £400 a year; and £400 a year ranked, among the incomes of that day, at least as high as £800 a year would rank at present. A single man living in the Temple with £400 a year might then be called opulent. Not one in ten of the young gentlemen of good families who were studying the law there had so much. But all the wealth which Lord Clive had brought from Bengal, and Sir Lawrence Dundas from Germany, joined together, would not have sufficed for Goldsmith. He spent twice as much as he had. He wore fine clothes, gave dinners of several courses, paid court to venal beauties. He had also, it should be remembered, to the honour of his heart, though not of his head, a guinea, or five, or ten, according to the state of his purse, ready for any tale of distress, true or false. But it was not in dress or feasting, in promiscuous amours or promiscuous charities, that his chief expense lay. He had been from boyhood a gambler, and at once the most sanguine and the most unskilful of gamblers. For a time he put off the day of inevitable ruin by temporary expedients. He obtained advances from booksellers, by promising to execute works which he never began. But at length this source of supply failed. He owed more than £2000; and he saw no hope of extrication from his embarrassments. His spirits and health gave way. He was attacked by a nervous fever, which he thought himself competent to treat. It would have been happy for him if his medical skill had been appreciated as justly by himself as by others. Notwithstanding the degree which he pretended to have received at Padua, he could procure no patients. "I do not practise," he once said; "I make it a rule to prescribe only for my friends." "Pray, dear Doctor," said Beauclerk, "alter your rule; and prescribe only for your enemies." Goldsmith now, in spite of this excellent advice, prescribed for himself. The remedy aggravated the malady. The sick man was induced to call in real physicians; and they at one time imagined that they had cured the disease. Still his weakness and restlessness continued. He could get no sleep. He could take no food. "You are worse," said one of his medical attendants, "than you should be from the degree of fever which you have. Is your mind at ease?" "No, it is not," were the last recorded words of Oliver Goldsmith. He died on the third of April 1774, in his forty-sixth year. He was laid in the churchyard of the Temple; but the spot was not marked by any inscription, and is now forgotten. The coffin was followed by Burke and Reynolds. Both these great men were sincere mourners. Burke, when he heard of Goldsmith's death, had burst into a flood of tears. Reynolds had been so much moved by the news that he had flung aside his brush and palette for the day.

A short time after Goldsmith's death, a little poem appeared, which will, as long as our language lasts, associate the names of his two illustrious friends with his own. It has already been mentioned that he sometimes felt keenly the sarcasm which his wild blundering talk brought upon him. He was, not long before his last illness, provoked into retaliating. He wisely betook himself to his pen; and at that weapon he proved himself a match for all his assailants together. Within a small compass he drew with a singularly easy and vigorous pencil the characters of nine or ten of his intimate associates. Though this little work did not receive his last touches, it must always be regarded as a masterpiece. It is impossible, however, not to wish that four or five likenesses which have no interest for posterity were wanting to that noble gallery, and that their places were supplied by sketches of Johnson and Gibbon, as happy and vivid as the sketches of Burke and Garrick.

Some of Goldsmith's friends and admirers honoured him with a cenotaph in Westminster Abbey. Nollekens was the sculptor; and Johnson wrote the inscription. It is much to be lamented that Johnson did not leave to posterity a more durable and a more valuable memorial of his friend. A life of Goldsmith would have been an inestimable addition to the Lives of the Poets. No man appreciated Goldsmith's writings more justly than Johnson; no man was better acquainted with Goldsmith's character and habits; and no man was more competent to delineate with truth and spirit the peculiarities of a mind in which great powers were found in company with great weaknesses. But the lists of poets to whose works Johnson was requested by the booksellers to furnish prefaces ended with Lyttleton, who died in 1773. The line seems to have been drawn expressly for the purpose of excluding the person whose portrait would have most fitly closed the series. Goldsmith, however, has been fortunate in his biographers. Within a few years his life has been written by Mr Prior, by Mr Washington Irving, and by Mr Forster. The diligence of Mr Prior deserves great praise; the style of Mr Washington Irving is always pleasing; but the highest place must, in justice, be assigned to the eminently interesting work of Mr Forster.

SAMUEL JOHNSON.

(December 1856.)

Samuel Johnson, one of the most eminent English writers of the eighteenth century, was the son of Michael Johnson, who was, at the beginning of that century, a magistrate of Lichfield, and a bookseller of great note in the midland counties. Michael's abilities and attainments seem to have been considerable. He was so well acquainted with the contents of the volumes which he exposed to sale, that the country rectors of Staffordshire and Worcestershire thought him an oracle on points of learning. Between him and the clergy, indeed, there was a strong religious and political sympathy. He was a zealous churchman, and, though he had qualified himself for muncipal office by taking the oaths to the sovereigns in possession, was to the last a Jacobite in heart. At his house, a house which is still pointed out to every traveller who visits Lichfield, Samuel was born on the 18th of September 1709. In the child, the physical, intellectual, and moral peculiarites which afterwards distinguished the man were plainly discernible; great muscular strength accompanied by much awkwardness and many infirmities; great quickness of parts, with a morbid propensity to sloth and procrastination; a kind and generous heart, with a gloomy and irritable temper. He had inherited from his ancestors a scrofulous taint, which it was beyond the power of medicine to remove. His parents were weak enough to believe that the royal touch was a specific for this malady. In his third year he was taken up to London, inspected by the court surgeon, prayed over by the court chaplains, and stroked and presented with a piece of gold by Queen Anne. One of his earliest recollections was that of a stately lady in a diamond stomacher and a long black hood. Her hand was applied in vain. The boy's features, which were originally noble and not irregular, were distorted by his malady. His cheeks were deeply scarred. He lost for a time the sight of one eye; and he saw but very imperfectly with the other. But the force of his mind overcame every impediment. Indolent as he was, he acquired knowledge with such ease and rapidity that at every school to which he was sent he was soon the best scholar. From sixteen to eighteen he resided at home, and was left to his own devices. He learned much at this time, though his studies were without guidance and without plan. He ransacked his father's shelves, dipped into a multitude of books, read what was interesting, and passed over what was dull. An ordinary lad would have acquired little or no useful knowledge in such a way: but much that was dull to ordinary lads was interesting to Samuel. He read little Greek: for his proficiency in that language was not such that he could take much pleasure in the masters of Attic poetry and eloquence. But he had left school a good Latinist; and he soon acquired, in the large and miscellaneous library of which he now had the command, an extensive knowledge of Latin literature. That Augustan delicacy of taste which is the boast of the great public schools of England he never possessed. But he was early familiar with some classical writers who were quite unknown to the best scholars in the sixth form at Eton. He was peculiarly attracted by the works of the great restorers of learning. Once, while searching for some apples, he found a huge folio volume of Petrarch's works. The name excited his curiosity; and he eagerly devoured hundreds of pages. Indeed, the diction and versification of his own Latin compositions show that he had paid at least as much attention to modern copies from the antique as to the original models.

While he was thus irregularly educating himself, his family was sinking into hopeless poverty. Old Michael Johnson was much better qualified to pore upon books, and to talk about them, than to trade in them. His business declined; his debts increased; it was with difficulty that the daily expenses of his household were defrayed. It was out of his power to support his son at either university; but a wealthy neighbour offered assistance; and, in reliance on promises which proved to be of very little value, Samuel was entered at Pembroke College, Oxford. When the young scholar presented himself to the rulers of that society, they were amazed not more by his ungainly figure and eccentric manners than by the quantity of extensive and curious information which he had picked up during many months of desultory but not unprofitable study. On the first day of his residence he surprised his teachers by quoting Macrobius; and one of the most learned among them declared that he had never known a freshman of equal attainments.

At Oxford, Johnson resided during about three years. He was poor, even to raggedness; and his appearance excited a mirth and a pity which were equally intolerable to his haughty spirit. He was driven from the quadrangle of Christ Church by the sneering looks which the members of that aristocratical society cast at the holes in his shoes. Some charitable person placed a new pair at his door; but he spurned them away in a fury. Distress made him, not servile, but reckless and ungovernable. No opulent gentleman commoner, panting for one-and-twenty, could have treated the academical authorities with more gross disrespect. The needy scholar was generally to be seen under the gate of Pembroke, a gate now adorned with his effigy, haranguing a circle of lads, over whom, in spite of his tattered gown and dirty linen, his wit and audacity gave him an undisputed ascendency. In every mutiny against the discipline of the college he was the ringleader. Much was pardoned, however, to a youth so highly distinguished by abilities and acquirements. He had early made himself known by turning Pope's Messiah into Latin verse. The style and rhythm, indeed, were not exactly Virgilian; but the translation found many admirers, and was read with pleasure by Pope himself.

The time drew near at which Johnson would, in the ordinary course of things, have become a Bachelor of Arts: but he was at the end of his resources. Those promises of support on which he had relied had not been kept. His family could do nothing for him. His debts to Oxford tradesmen were small indeed, yet larger than he could pay. In the autumn of 1731, he was under the necessity of quitting the university without a degree. In the following winter his father died. The old man left but a pittance; and of that pittance almost the whole was appropriated to the support of his widow. The property to which Samuel succeeded amounted to no more than twenty pounds.

His life, during the thirty years which followed, was one hard struggle with poverty. The misery of that struggle needed no aggravation, but was aggravated by the sufferings of an unsound body and an unsound mind. Before the young man left the university, his hereditary malady had broken forth in a singularly cruel form. He had become an incurable hypochondriac. He said long after that he had been mad all his life, or at least not perfectly sane; and, in truth, eccentricities less strange than his have often been thought grounds sufficient for absolving felons, and for setting aside wills. His grimaces, his gestures, his mutterings, sometimes diverted and sometimes terrified people who did not know him. At a dinner table he would, in a fit of absence, stoop down and twitch off a lady's shoe. He would amaze a drawing-room by suddenly ejaculating a clause of the Lord's Prayer. He would conceive an unintelligible aversion to a particular alley, and perform a great circuit rather than see the hateful place. He would set his heart on touching every post in the streets through which he walked. If by any chance he missed a post, he would go back a hundred yards and repair the omission. Under the influence of his disease, his senses became morbidly torpid, and his imagination morbidly active. At one time he would stand poring on the town clock without being able to tell the hour. At another, he would distinctly hear his mother, who was many miles off, calling him by his name. But this was not the worst. A deep melancholy took possession of him, and gave a dark tinge to all his views of human nature and of human destiny. Such wretchedness as he endured has driven many men to shoot themselves or drown themselves. But he was under no temptation to commit suicide. He was sick of life; but he was afraid of death; and he shuddered at every sight or sound which reminded him of the inevitable hour. In religion he found but little comfort during his long and frequent fits of dejection; for his religion partook of his own character. The light from heaven shone on him indeed, but not in a direct line, or with its own pure splendour. The rays had to struggle through a disturbing medium; they reached him refracted, dulled and discoloured by the thick gloom which had settled on his soul; and, though they might be sufficiently clear to guide him, were too dim to cheer him.

With such infirmities of body and mind, this celebrated man was left, at two-and-twenty, to fight his way through the world. He remained during about five years in the midland counties. At Lichfield, his birthplace and his early home, he had inherited some friends and acquired others. He was kindly noticed by Henry Hervey, a gay officer of noble family, who happened to be quartered there. Gilbert Walmesley, registrar of the ecclesiastical court of the diocese, a man of distinguished parts, learning, and knowledge of the world, did himself honour by patronising the young adventurer, whose repulsive person, unpolished manners, and squalid garb moved many of the petty aristocracy of the neighbourhood to laughter or to disgust. At Lichfield, however, Johnson could find no way of earning a livelihood. He became usher of a grammar school in Leicestershire; he resided as a humble companion in the house of a country gentleman; but a life of dependence was insupportable to his haughty spirit. He repaired to Birmingham, and there earned a few guineas by literary drudgery. In that town he printed a translation, little noticed at the time, and long forgotten, of a Latin book about Abyssinia. He then put forth proposals for publishing by subscription the poems of Politian, with notes containing a history of modern Latin verse: but subscriptions did not come in; and the volume never appeared.

While leading this vagrant and miserable life, Johnson fell in love

The object of his passion was Mrs Elizabeth Porter, a widow who had children as old as himself. To ordinary spectators, the lady appeared to be a short, fat, coarse woman, painted half an inch thick, dressed in gaudy colours, and fond of exhibiting provincial airs and graces which were not exactly those of the Queensberrys and Lepels. To Johnson, however, whose passions were strong, whose eyesight was too weak to distinguish ceruse from natural bloom, and who had seldom or never been in the same room with a woman of real fashion, his Titty, as he called her, was the most beautiful, graceful, and accomplished of her sex. That his admiration was unfeigned cannot be doubted; for she was as poor as himself. She accepted, with a readiness which did her little honour, the addresses of a suitor who might have been her son. The marriage, however, in spite of occasional wranglings, proved happier than might have been expected. The lover continued to be under the illusions of the wedding-day till the lady died in her sixty-fourth year. On her monument he placed an inscription extolling the charms of her person and of her manners; and when, long after her decease, he had occasion to mention her, he exclaimed, with a tenderness half ludicrous, half pathetic, "Pretty creature!"

His marriage made it necessary for him to exert himself more strenuously than he had hitherto done. He took a house in the neighbourhood of his native town, and advertised for pupils. But eighteen months passed away; and only three pupils came to his academy. Indeed, his appearance was so strange, and his temper so violent, that his schoolroom must have resembled an ogre's den. Nor was the tawdry painted grandmother whom he called his Titty well qualified to make provision for the comfort of young gentlemen. David Garrick, who was one of the pupils, used, many years later, to throw the best company of London into convulsions of laughter by mimicking the endearments of this extraordinary pair.

At length Johnson, in the twenty-eighth year of his age, determined to seek his fortune in the capital as a literary adventurer. He set out with a few guineas, three acts of the tragedy of Irene in manuscript, and two or three letters of introduction from his friend Walmesley.

Never, since literature became a calling in England, had it been a less gainful calling than at the time when Johnson took up his residence in London. In the preceding generation a writer of eminent merit was sure to be munificently rewarded by the government. The least that he could expect was a pension or a sinecure place; and, if he showed any aptitude for politics, he might hope to be a member of parliament, a lord of the treasury, an ambassador, a secretary of state. It would be easy, on the other hand, to name several writers of the nineteenth century of whom the least successful has received forty thousand pounds from the booksellers. But Johnson entered on his vocation in the most dreary part of the dreary interval which separated two ages of prosperity. Literature had ceased to flourish under the patronage of the great, and had not begun to flourish under the patronage of the public. One man of letters, indeed, Pope, had acquired by his pen what was then considered as a handsome fortune, and lived on a footing of equality with nobles and ministers of state. But this was a solitary exception. Even an author whose reputation was established, and whose works were popular, such an author as Thomson, whose Seasons were in every library, such an author as Fielding, whose Pasquin had had a greater run than any drama since The Beggar's Opera, was sometimes glad to obtain, by pawning his best coat, the means of dining on tripe at a cookshop underground, where he could wipe his hands, after his greasy meal, on the back of a Newfoundland dog. It is easy, therefore, to imagine what humiliations and privations must have awaited the novice who had still to earn a name. One of the publishers to whom Johnson applied for employment measured with a scornful eye that athletic though uncouth frame, and exclaimed, "You had better get a porter's knot, and carry trunks." Nor was the advice bad; for a porter was likely to be as plentifully fed, and as comfortably lodged, as a poet.

Some time appears to have elapsed before Johnson was able to form any literary connection from which he could expect more than bread for the day which was passing over him. He never forgot the generosity with which Hervey, who was now residing in London, relieved his wants during this time of trial. "Harry Hervey," said the old philosopher many years later, "was a vicious man; but he was very kind to me. If you call a dog Hervey I shall love him." At Hervey's table Johnson sometimes enjoyed feasts which were made more agreeable by contrast. But in general he dined, and thought that he dined well, on sixpenny worth of meat, and a pennyworth of bread, at an alehouse near Drury Lane.

The effect of the privations and sufferings which he endured at this time was discernible to the last in his temper and his deportment. His manners had never been courtly. They now became almost savage. Being frequently under the necessity of wearing shabby coats and dirty shirts, he became a confirmed sloven. Being often very hungry when he sat down to his meals, he contracted a habit of eating with ravenous greediness. Even to the end of his life, and even at the tables of the great, the sight of food affected him as it affects wild beasts and birds of prey. His taste in cookery, formed in subterranean ordinaries and alamode beefshops, was far from delicate. Whenever he was so fortunate as to have near him a hare that had been kept too long, or a meat pie made with rancid butter, he gorged himself with such violence that his veins swelled, and the moisture broke out on his forehead. The affronts which his poverty emboldened stupid and low-minded men to offer to him would have broken a mean spirit into sycophancy, but made him rude even to ferocity. Unhappily the insolence which, while it was defensive, was pardonable, and in some sense respectable, accompanied him into societies where he was treated with courtesy and kindness. He was repeatedly provoked into striking those who had taken liberties with him. All the sufferers, however, were wise enough to abstain from talking about their beatings, except Osborne, the most rapacious and brutal of booksellers, who proclaimed everywhere that he had been knocked down by the huge fellow whom he had hired to puff the Harleian Library.

About a year after Johnson had begun to reside in London, he was fortunate enough to obtain regular employment from Cave, an enterprising and intelligent bookseller, who was proprietor and editor of the "Gentleman's Magazine." That journal, just entering on the ninth year of its long existence, was the only periodical work in the kingdom which then had what would now be called a large circulation. It was, indeed, the chief source of parliamentary intelligence. It was not then safe, even during a recess, to publish an account of the proceedings of either House without some disguise. Cave, however, ventured to entertain his readers with what he called "Reports of the Debates of the Senate of Lilliput."

France was Blefuscu ; London was Mildendo : pounds were sprugs : the Duke of Newcastle was the Nardac secretary of State : Lord Hardwicke was the Hurgo Hickrad : and William Pulteney was Wingul Pulnub. To write the speeches was, during several years, the business of Johnson. He was generally furnished with notes, meagre indeed, and inaccurate, of what had been said ; but sometimes he had to find arguments and eloquence both for the ministry and for the opposition. He was himself a Tory, not from rational conviction—for his serious opinion was that one form of government was just as good or as bad as another—but from mere passion, such as inflamed the Capulets against the Montagues, or the Blues of the Roman circus against the Greens. In his infancy he had heard so much talk about the villanies of the Whigs, and the dangers of the Church, that he had become a furious partisan when he could scarcely speak. Before he was three he had insisted on being taken to hear Sacheverell preach at Lichfield Cathedral, and had listened to the sermon with as much respect, and probably with as much intelligence, as any Staffordshire squire in the congregation. The work which had been begun in the nursery had been completed by the university. Oxford, when Johnson resided there, was the most Jacobitical place in England ; and Pembroke was one of the most Jacobital colleges in Oxford. The prejudices which he brought up to London were scarcely less absurd than those of his own Tom Tempest. Charles II. and James II. were two of the best kings that ever reigned. Laud, a poor creature who never did, said, or wrote anything indicating more than the ordinary capacity of an old woman, was a prodigy of parts and learning over whose tomb Art and Genius still continued to weep. Hampden deserved no more honourable name than that of "the zealot of rebellion." Even the ship money, condemned not less decidedly by Falkland and Clarendon than by the bitterest Roundheads, Johnson would not pronounce to have been an unconstitutional impost. Under a government, the mildest that had ever been known in the world—under a government, which allowed to the people an unprecedented liberty of speech and action—he fancied that he was a slave ; he assailed the ministry with obloquy which refuted itself, and regretted the lost freedom and happiness of those golden days in which a writer who had taken but one-tenth part of the license allowed to him would have been pilloried, mangled with the shears, whipped at the cart's tail, and flung into a noisome dungeon to die. He hated dissenters and stockjobbers, the excise and the army, septennial parliaments, and continental connections. He long had an aversion to the Scotch, an aversion of which he could not remember the commencement, but which, he owned, had probably originated in his abhorrence of the conduct of the nation during the Great Rebellion. It is easy to guess in what manner debates on great party questions were likely to be reported by a man whose judgment was so much disordered by party spirit. A show of fairness was indeed necessary to the prosperity of the Magazine. But Johnson long afterwards owned that, though he had saved appearances, he had taken care that the Whig dogs should not have the best of it ; and, in fact, every passage which has lived, every passage which bears the marks of his higher faculties, is put into the mouth of some member of the opposition.

A few weeks after Johnson had entered on these obscure labours, he published a work which at once placed him high among the writers of his age. It is probable that what he had suffered during his first year in London had often reminded him of some parts of that noble poem in which Juvenal had described the misery and degradation of a needy man of letters, lodged among the pigeons' nests in the tottering garrets which overhung the streets of Rome. Pope's admirable imitations of Horace's Satires and Epistles had recently appeared, were in every hand, and were by many readers thought superior to the originals. What Pope had done for Horace, Johnson aspired to do for Juvenal. The enterprise was bold and yet judicious. For between Johnson and Juvenal there was much in common, much more certainly than between Pope and Horace.

Johnson's London appeared without his name in May 1738. He received only ten guineas for this stately and vigorous poem; but the sale was rapid, and the success complete. A second edition was required within a week. Those small critics who are always desirous to lower established reputations ran about proclaiming that the anonymous satirist was superior to Pope in Pope's own peculiar department of literature. It ought to be remembered, to the honour of Pope, that he joined heartily in the applause with which the appearance of a rival genius was welcomed. He made inquiries about the author of London. Such a man, he said, could not long be concealed. The name was soon discovered; and Pope, with great kindness, exerted himself to obtain an academical degree and the mastership of a grammar school for the poor young poet. The attempt failed; and Johnson remained a bookseller's hack.

It does not appear that these two men, the most eminent writer of the generation which was going out, and the most eminent writer of the generation which was coming in, ever saw each other. They lived in very different circles, one surrounded by dukes and earls, the other by starving pamphleteers and index makers. Among Johnson's associates at this time may be mentioned Boyse, who, when his shirts were pledged, scrawled Latin verses sitting up in bed with his arms through two holes in his blanket; who composed very respectable sacred poetry when he was sober; and who was at last run over by a hackney coach when he was drunk: Hoole, surnamed the metaphysical tailor, who, instead of attending to his measures, used to trace geometrical diagrams on the board where he sate cross-legged; and the penitent impostor, George Psalmanazar, who, after poring all day, in a humble lodging, on the folios of Jewish rabbis and Christian fathers, indulged himself at night with literary and theological conversation at an alehouse in the city. But the most remarkable of the persons with whom at this time Johnson consorted was Richard Savage, an earl's son, a shoemaker's apprentice, who had seen life in all its forms, who had feasted among blue ribands in Saint James's Square, and had lain with fifty pounds' weight of iron on his legs in the condemned ward of Newgate. This man had, after many vicissitudes of fortune, sunk at last into abject and hopeless poverty. His pen had failed him. His patrons had been taken away by death, or estranged by the riotous profusion with which he squandered their bounty, and the ungrateful insolence with which he rejected their advice. He now lived by begging. He dined on venison and champagne whenever he had been so fortunate as to borrow a guinea. If his questing had been unsuccessful, he appeased the rage of hunger with some scraps of broken meat, and lay down to rest under the Piazza of Covent Garden in warm weather, and, in cold weather, as near as he could get to the furnace of a glass house. Yet, in his misery, he was still an agreeable companion. He had an inexhaustible store of anecdotes about that gay and brilliant world from which he was now an outcast. He had observed the great men of both parties in hours of careless relaxation, had seen the leaders of opposition without the mask of patriotism, and had heard the prime minister roar with laughter and tell stories not over decent. During some months Savage lived in the closest familiarity with Johnson; and then the friends parted, not without tears. Johnson remained in London to drudge for Cave. Savage went to the West of England, lived there as he had lived everywhere, and in 1743, died, penniless and heart-broken, in Bristol gaol.

Soon after his death, while the public curiosity was strongly excited about his extraordinary character, and his not less extraordinary adventures, a life of him appeared widely different from the catchpenny lives of eminent men which were then a staple article of manufacture in Grub Street. The style was indeed deficient in ease and variety; and the writer was evidently too partial to the Latin element of our language. But the little work, with all its faults, was a masterpiece. No finer specimen of literary biography existed in any language, living or dead; and a discerning critic might have confidently predicted that the author was destined to be the founder of a new school of English eloquence.

The life of Savage was anonymous; but it was well known in literary circles that Johnson was the writer. During the three years which followed, he produced no important work; but he was not, and indeed could not be, idle. The fame of his abilities and learning continued to grow. Warburton pronounced him a man of parts and genius; and the praise of Warburton was then no light thing. Such was Johnson's reputation that, in 1747, several eminent booksellers combined to employ him in the arduous work of preparing a Dictionary of the English language, in two folio volumes. The sum which they agreed to pay him was only fifteen hundred guineas; and out of this sum he had to pay several poor men of letters who assisted him in the humbler parts of his task.

The prospectus of the Dictionary he addressed to the Earl of Chesterfield. Chesterfield had long been celebrated for the politeness of his manners, the brilliancy of his wit, and the delicacy of his taste. He was acknowledged to be the finest speaker in the House of Lords. He had recently governed Ireland, at a momentous conjuncture, with eminent firmness, wisdom, and humanity; and he had since become Secretary of State. He received Johnson's homage with the most winning affability, and requited it with a few guineas, bestowed doubtless in a very graceful manner, but was by no means desirous to see all his carpets blackened with the London mud, and his soups and wines thrown to right and left over the gowns of fine ladies and the waistcoats of fine gentlemen, by an absent, awkward scholar, who gave strange starts and uttered strange growls, who dressed like a scarecrow, and ate like a cormorant. During some time Johnson continued to call on his patron, but after being repeatedly told by the porter that his lordship was not at home, took the hint, and ceased to present himself at the inhospitable door.

Johnson had flattered himself that he should have completed his Dictionary by the end of 1750; but it was not till 1755 that he at length gave his huge volumes to the world. During the seven years which he passed in the drudgery of penning definitions and marking quotations for transcription, he sought for relaxation in literary labour of a more agreeable kind. In 1749 he published the Vanity of Human Wishes, an excellent imitation of the Tenth Satire of Juvenal. It is in truth not easy to say whether the palm belongs to the ancient or to the modern poet. The couplets in which the fall of Wolsey is described, though lofty and sonorous, are feeble when compared with the wonderful lines which bring before us all Rome in tumult on the day of the fall of Sejanus, the laurels on the doorposts, the white bull stalking towards the Capitol, the statues rolling down from their pedestals, the flatterers of the disgraced minister running to see him dragged with a hook through the streets, and to have a kick at his carcase before it is hurled into the Tiber. It must be owned too that in the concluding passage the Christian moralist has not made the most of his advantages, and has fallen decidedly short of the sublimity of his Pagan model. On the other hand, Juvenal's Hannibal must yield to Johnson's Charles ; and Johnson's vigorous and pathetic enumeration of the miseries of a literary life must be allowed to be superior to Juvenal's lamentation over the fate of Demosthenes and Cicero.

For the copyright of the Vanity of Human Wishes Johnson received only fifteen guineas.

A few days after the publication of this poem, his tragedy, begun many years before, was brought on the stage. His pupil, David Garrick, had, in 1741, made his appearance on a humble stage in Goodman's Fields, had at once risen to the first place among actors, and was now, after several years of almost uninterrupted success, manager of Drury Lane Theatre. The relation between him and his old preceptor was of a very singular kind. They repelled each other strongly, and yet attracted each other strongly. Nature had made them of very different clay ; and circumstances had fully brought out the natural peculiarities of both. Sudden prosperity had turned Garrick's head. Continued adversity had soured Johnson's temper. Johnson saw with more envy than became so great a man the villa, the plate, the china, the Brussels carpet, which the little mimic had got by repeating, with grimaces and gesticulations, what wiser men had written ; and the exquisitely sensitive vanity of Garrick was galled by the thought that, while all the rest of the world was applauding him, he could obtain from one morose cynic, whose opinion it was impossible to despise, scarcely any compliment not acidulated with scorn. Yet the two Lichfield men had so many early recollections in common, and sympathised with each other on so many points on which they sympathised with nobody else in the vast population of the capital, that, though the master was often provoked by the monkey-like impertinence of the pupil, and the pupil by the bearish rudeness of the master, they remained friends till they were parted by death. Garrick now brought Irene out, with alterations sufficient to displease the author, yet not sufficient to make the piece pleasing to the audience. The public, however, listened with little emotion, but with much civility, to five acts of monotonous declamation. After nine representations the play was withdrawn. It is, indeed, altogether unsuited to the stage, and, even when perused in the closet, will be found hardly worthy of the author. He had not the slightest notion of what blank verse should be. A change in the last syllable of every other line would make the versification of the Vanity of Human Wishes closely resemble the versification of Irene. The poet, however, cleared, by his benefit nights, and by the sale of the copyright of his tragedy, about three hundred pounds, then a great sum in his estimation.

About a year after the representation of Irene, he began to publish a series of short essays on morals, manners, and literature. This species of composition had been brought into fashion by the success of the Tatler, and by the still more brilliant success of the Spectator. A crowd of small writers had vainly attempted to rival Addison. The Lay Monastery, the Censor, the Freethinker, the Plain Dealer, the Champion, and other works of the same kind, had had their short day. None of them had obtained a permanent place in our literature; and they are now to be found only in the libraries of the curious. At length Johnson undertook the adventure in which so many aspirants had failed. In the thirty-sixth year after the appearance of the last number of the Spectator appeared the first number of the Rambler. From March 1750 to March 1752 this paper continued to come out every Tuesday and Saturday.

From the first the Rambler was enthusiastically admired by a few eminent men. Richardson, when only five numbers had appeared, pronounced it equal, if not superior, to the Spectator. Young and Hartley expressed their approbation not less warmly. Bubb Doddington, among whose many faults indifference to the claims of genius and learning cannot be reckoned, solicited the acquaintance of the writer. In consequence probably of the good offices of Doddington, who was then the confidential adviser of Prince Frederic, two of his Royal Highness's gentlemen carried a gracious message to the printing office, and ordered seven copies for Leicester House. But these overtures seem to have been very coldly received. Johnson had had enough of the patronage of the great to last him all his life, and was not disposed to haunt any other door as he had haunted the door of Chesterfield.

By the public the Rambler was at first very coldly received. Though the price of a number was only twopence, the sale did not amount to five hundred. The profits were therefore very small. But as soon as the flying leaves were collected and reprinted they became popular. The author lived to see thirteen thousand copies spread over England alone. Separate editions were published for the Scotch and Irish markets. A large party pronounced the style perfect, so absolutely perfect that in some essays it would be impossible for the writer himself to alter a single word for the better. Another party, not less numerous, vehemently accused him of having corrupted the purity of the English tongue. The best critics admitted that his diction was too monotonous, too obviously artificial, and now and then turgid even to absurdity. But they did justice to the acuteness of his observations on morals and manners, to the constant precision and frequent brilliancy of his language, to the weighty and magnificent eloquence of many serious passages, and to the solemn yet pleasing humour of some of the lighter papers. On the question of precedence between Addison and Johnson, a question which, seventy years ago, was much disputed, posterity has pronounced a decision from which there is no appeal. Sir Roger, his chaplain and his butler, Will Wimble and Will Honeycomb, the Vision of Mirza, the Journal of the Retired Citizen, the Everlasting Club, the Dunmow Flitch, the Loves of Hilpah and Shalum, the Visit to the Exchange, and the Visit to the Abbey, are known to everybody. But many men and women, even of highly cultivated minds, are unacquainted with Squire Bluster and Mrs Busy, Quisquilius and Venustulus, the Allegory of Wit and Learning, the Chronicle of the Revolutions of a Garret, and the sad fate of Aningait and Ajut.

The last Rambler was written in a sad and gloomy hour. Mrs Johnson had been given over by the physicians. Three days later she died. She left her husband almost broken-hearted. Many people had been surprised to see a man of his genius and learning stooping to every drudgery, and denying himself almost every comfort, for the purpose of supplying a silly, affected old woman with superfluities, which she accepted with but little gratitude. But all his affection had been concentrated on her.

He had neither brother nor sister, neither son nor daughter. To him she was beautiful as the Gunnings, and witty as Lady Mary. Her opinion of his writings was more important to him than the voice of the pit of Drury Lane Theatre or the judgment of the Monthly Review. The chief support which had sustained him through the most arduous labour of his life was the hope that she would enjoy the fame and the profit which he anticipated from his Dictionary. She was gone ; and in that vast labyrinth of streets, peopled by eight hundred thousand human beings, he was alone. Yet it was necessary for him to set himself, as he expressed it, doggedly to work. After three more laborious years, the Dictionary was at length complete.

It had been generally supposed that this great work would be dedicated to the eloquent and accomplished nobleman to whom the prospectus had been addressed. He well knew the value of such a compliment ; and therefore, when the day of publication drew near, he exerted himself to soothe, by a show of zealous and at the same time of delicate and judicious kindness, the pride which he had so cruelly wounded. Since the Ramblers had ceased to appear, the town had been entertained by a journal called the World, to which many men of high rank and fashion contributed. In two successive numbers of the World the Dictionary was, to use the modern phrase, puffed with wonderful skill. The writings of Johnson were warmly praised. It was proposed that he should be invested with the authority of a Dictator, nay, of a Pope, over our language, and that his decisions about the meaning and the spelling of words should be received as final. His two folios, it was said, would of course be bought by everybody who could afford to buy them. It was soon known that these papers were written by Chesterfield. But the just resentment of Johnson was not to be so appeased. In a letter written with singular energy and dignity of thought and language, he repelled the tardy advances of his patron. The Dictionary came forth without a dedication. In the preface the author truly declared that he owed nothing to the great, and described the difficulties with which he had been left to struggle so forcibly and pathetically that the ablest and most malevolent of all the enemies of his fame, Horne Tooke, never could read that passage without tears.

The public, on this occasion, did Johnson full justice, and something more than justice. The best lexicographer may well be content if his productions are received by the world with cold esteem. But Johnson's Dictionary was hailed with an enthusiasm such as no similar work has ever excited. It was indeed the first dictionary which could be read with pleasure. The definitions show so much acuteness of thought and command of language, and the passages quoted from poets, divines, and philosophers are so skilfully selected, that a leisure hour may always be very agreeably spent in turning over the pages. The faults of the book resolve themselves, for the most part, into one great fault. Johnson was a wretched etymologist. He knew little or nothing of any Teutonic language except English, which indeed, as he wrote it, was scarcely a Teutonic language ; and thus he was absolutely at the mercy of Junius and Skinner.

The Dictionary, though it raised Johnson's fame, added nothing to his pecuniary means. The fifteen hundred guineas which the booksellers had agreed to pay him had been advanced and spent before the last sheets issued from the press. It is painful to relate that, twice in the course of the year which followed the publication of this great work, he was arrested and carried to spunging-houses, and that he was twice indebted for his liberty to his excellent friend Richardson. It was still necessary for the man who had been formally saluted by the highest authority as Dictator of the English language to supply his wants by constant toil. He abridged his Dictionary. He proposed to bring out an edition of Shakspeare by subscription; and many subscribers sent in their names and laid down their money; but he soon found the task so little to his taste that he turned to more attractive employments. He contributed many papers to a new monthly journal, which was called the Literary Magazine. Few of these papers have much interest; but among them was the very best thing that he ever wrote, a masterpiece both of reasoning and of satirical pleasantry, the review of Jenyns's Inquiry into the Nature and Origin of Evil.

In the spring of 1758 Johnson put forth the first of a series of essays, entitled the Idler. During two years these essays continued to appear weekly. They were eagerly read, widely circulated, and indeed, impudently pirated, while they were still in the original form, and had a large sale when collected into volumes. The Idler may be described as a second part of the Rambler, somewhat livelier and somewhat weaker than the first part.

While Johnson was busied with his Idlers, his mother, who had accomplished her ninetieth year, died at Lichfield. It was long since he had seen her; but he had not failed to contribute largely, out of his small means, to her comfort. In order to defray the charges of her funeral, and to pay some debts which she had left, he wrote a little book in a single week, and sent off the sheets to the press without reading them over. A hundred pounds were paid him for the copyright; and the purchasers had great cause to be pleased with their bargain; for the book was Rasselas.

The success of Rasselas was great, though such ladies as Miss Lydia Languish must have been grievously disappointed when they found that the new volume from the circulating library was little more than a dissertation on the author's favourite theme, the Vanity of Human Wishes; that the Prince of Abyssinia was without a mistress, and the princess without a lover; and that the story set the hero and the heroine down exactly where it had taken them up. The style was the subject of much eager controversy. The Monthly Review and the Critical Review took different sides. Many readers pronounced the writer a pompous pedant, who would never use a word of two syllables where it was possible to use a word of six, and who could not make a waiting woman relate her adventures without balancing every noun with another noun, and every epithet with another epithet. Another party, not less zealous, cited with delight numerous passages in which weighty meaning was expressed with accuracy and illustrated with splendour. And both the censure and the praise were merited.

About the plan of Rasselas little was said by the critics; and yet the faults of the plan might seem to invite severe criticism. Johnson has frequently blamed Shakspeare for neglecting the proprieties of time and place, and for ascribing to one age or nation the manners and opinions of another. Yet Shakspeare has not sinned in this way more grievously than Johnson. Rasselas and Imlac, Nekayah and Pekuah, are evidently meant to be Abyssinians of the eighteenth century: for the Europe which Imlac describes is the Europe of the eighteenth century; and the inmates of the Happy Valley talk familiarly of that law of gravitation which Newton discovered, and which was not fully received even at Cambridge till the eighteenth century. What a real company of Abyssinians would have been may be learned from Bruce's Travels. But Johnson, not content with turning filthy savages, ignorant of their letters, and gorged with raw steaks cut from living cows, into philosophers as eloquent and enlightened as himself or his friend Burke, and into ladies as highly accomplished as Mrs Lennox or Mrs Sheridan, transferred the whole domestic system of England to Egypt. Into a land of harems, a land of polygamy, a land where women are married without ever being seen, he introduced the flirtations and jealousies of our ball-rooms. In a land where there is boundless liberty of divorce, wedlock is described as the indissoluble compact. "A youth and maiden meeting by chance, or brought together by artifice, exchange glances, reciprocate civilities, go home, and dream of each other. Such," says Rasselas, "is the common process of marriage." Such it may have been, and may still be, in London, but assuredly not at Cairo. A writer who was guilty of such improprieties had little right to blame the poet who made Hector quote Aristotle, and represented Julio Romano as flourishing in the days of the oracle of Delphi.

By such exertions as have been described, Johnson supported himself till the year 1762. In that year a great change in his circumstances took place. He had from a child been an enemy of the reigning dynasty. His Jacobite prejudices had been exhibited with little disguise both in his works and in his conversation. Even in his massy and elaborate Dictionary, he had, with a strange want of taste and judgment, inserted bitter and contumelious reflections on the Whig party. The excise, which was a favourite resource of Whig financiers, he had designated as a hateful tax. He had railed against the commissioners of excise in language so coarse that they had seriously thought of prosecuting him. He had with difficulty been prevented from holding up the Lord Privy Seal by name as an example of the meaning of the word "renegade." A pension he had defined as pay given to a state hireling to betray his country; a pensioner as a slave of state hired by a stipend to obey a master. It seemed unlikely that the author of these definitions would himself be pensioned. But that was a time of wonders. George the Third had ascended the throne; and had, in the course of a few months, disgusted many of the old friends and conciliated many of the old enemies of his house. The city was becoming mutinous. Oxford was becoming loyal. Cavendishes and Bentincks were murmuring. Somersets and Wyndhams were hastening to kiss hands. The head of the treasury was now Lord Bute, who was a Tory, and could have no objection to Johnson's Toryism. Bute wished to be thought a patron of men of letters; and Johnson was one of the most eminent and one of the most needy men of letters in Europe. A pension of three hundred a year was graciously offered, and with very little hesitation accepted.

This event produced a change in Johnson's whole way of life. For the first time since his boyhood he no longer felt the daily goad urging him to the daily toil. He was at liberty, after thirty years of anxiety and drudgery, to indulge his constitutional indolence, to lie in bed till two in the afternoon, and to sit up talking till four in the morning, without fearing either the printer's devil or the sheriff's officer.

One laborious task indeed he had bound himself to perform. He had received large subscriptions for his promised edition of Shakspeare; he had lived on those subscriptions during some years: and he could not without disgrace omit to perform his part of the contract. His friends repeatedly exhorted him to make an effort; and he repeatedly resolved to do so. But, notwithstanding their exhortations and his resolutions, month followed month, year followed year, and nothing was done. He prayed fervently against his idleness; he determined, as often as he received the sacrament, that he would no longer doze away and trifle away his time; but the spell under which he lay resisted prayer and sacrament. His private notes at this time are made up of self-reproaches. "My indolence," he wrote on Easter Eve in 1764, "has sunk into grosser sluggishness. A kind of strange oblivion has overspread me, so that I know not what has become of the last year." Easter 1765 came, and found him still in the same state. "My time," he wrote, "has been unprofitably spent, and seems as a dream that has left nothing behind. My memory grows confused, and I know not how the days pass over me." Happily for his honour, the charm which held him captive was at length broken by no gentle or friendly hand. He had been weak enough to pay serious attention to a story about a ghost which haunted a house in Cock Lane, and had actually gone himself with some of his friends, at one in the morning, to St John's Church, Clerkenwell, in the hope of receiving a communication from the perturbed spirit. But the spirit, though adjured with all solemnity, remained obstinately silent; and it soon appeared that a naughty girl of eleven had been amusing herself by making fools of so many philosophers. Churchill, who, confident in his powers, drunk with popularity, and burning with party spirit, was looking for some man of established fame and Tory politics to insult, celebrated the Cock Lane Ghost in three cantos, nicknamed Johnson Pomposo, asked where the book was which had been so long promised and so liberally paid for, and directly accused the great moralist of cheating. This terrible word proved effectual; and in October 1765 appeared, after a delay of nine years, the new edition of Shakspeare.

This publication saved Johnson's character for honesty, but added nothing to the fame of his abilities and learning. The preface, though it contains some good passages, is not in his best manner. The most valuable notes are those in which he had an opportunity of showing how attentively he had during many years observed human life and human nature. The best specimen is the note on the character of Polonius. Nothing so good is to be found even in Wilhelm Meister's admirable examination of Hamlet. But here praise must end. It would be difficult to name a more slovenly, a more worthless edition of any great classic. The reader may turn over play after play without finding one happy conjectural emendation, or one ingenious and satisfactory explanation of a passage which had baffled preceding commentators. Johnson had, in his prospectus, told the world that he was peculiarly fitted for the task which he had undertaken, because he had, as a lexicographer, been under the necessity of taking a wider view of the English language than any of his predecessors. That his knowledge of our literature was extensive is indisputable. But, unfortunately, he had altogether neglected that very part of our literature with which it is especially desirable that an editor of Shakspeare should be conversant. It is dangerous to assert a negative. Yet little will be risked by the assertion, that in the two folio volumes of the English Dictionary there is not a single passage quoted from any dramatist of the Elizabethan age, except Shakspeare and Ben. Even from Ben the quotations are few. Johnson might easily, in a few months, have made himself well acquainted with every old play that was extant. But it never seems to have occurred to him that this was a necessary preparation for the work which he had undertaken. He would doubtless have admitted that it would be the height of absurdity in a man who was not familiar with the works of Æschylus and Euripides to publish an edition of Sophocles. Yet he ventured to publish an edition of Shakspeare, without having ever in his life, as far as can be discovered, read a single scene of Massinger, Ford, Decker, Webster, Marlow, Beaumont, or Fletcher. His detractors were noisy and scurrilous. Those who most loved and honoured him had little to say in praise of the manner in which he had discharged the duty of a commentator. He had, however, acquitted himself of a debt which had long lain heavy on his conscience; and he sank back into the repose from which the sting of satire had roused him. He long continued to live upon the fame which he had already won. He was honoured by the University of Oxford with a Doctor's degree, by the Royal Academy with a professorship, and by the King with an interview, in which his Majesty most graciously expressed a hope that so excellent a writer would not cease to write. In the interval, however, between 1765 and 1775 Johnson published only two or three political tracts, the longest of which he could have produced in forty-eight hours, if he had worked as he worked on the life of Savage and on Rasselas.

But, though his pen was now idle, his tongue was active. The influence exercised by his conversation, directly upon those with whom he lived, and indirectly on the whole literary world, was altogether without a parallel. His colloquial talents were indeed of the highest order. He had strong sense, quick discernment, wit, humour, immense knowledge of literature and of life, and an infinite store of curious anecdotes. As respected style, he spoke far better than he wrote. Every sentence which dropped from his lips was as correct in structure as the most nicely balanced period of the Rambler. But in his talk there was no pompous triads, and little more than a fair proportion of words in *osity* and *ation*. All was simplicity, ease, and vigour. He uttered his short, weighty, and pointed sentences with a power of voice, and a justness and energy of emphasis, of which the effect was rather increased than diminished by the rollings of his huge form, and by the asthmatic gaspings and puffings in which the peals of his eloquence generally ended. Nor did the laziness which made him unwilling to sit down to his desk prevent him from giving instruction or entertainment orally. To discuss questions of taste, of learning, of casuistry, in language so exact and so forcible that it might have been printed without the alteration of a word, was to him no exertion, but a pleasure. He loved, as he said, to fold his legs and have his talk out. He was ready to bestow the overflowings of his full mind on anybody who would start a subject, on a fellow-passenger in a stage coach, or on the person who sate at the same table with him in an eating-house. But his conversation was nowhere so brilliant and striking as when he was surrounded by a few friends, whose abilities and knowledge enabled them, as he once expressed it, to send him back every ball that he threw. Some of these, in 1764, formed themselves into a club, which gradually became a formidable power in the commonwealth of letters. The verdicts pronounced by this conclave on new books were speedily known over all London, and were sufficient to sell off a whole edition in a day, or to condemn the sheets to the service of the trunk-maker and the pastry-cook. Nor shall we think this strange when we consider what great and various talents and acquirements met in the little fraternity. Goldsmith was the representative of poetry and light literature, Reynolds of the arts, Burke of political eloquence and political philosophy. There, too, were Gibbon, the greatest historian, and Jones, the greatest linguist, of the age. Garrick brought to the meetings his inexhaustible pleasantry, his incomparable mimicry, and his consummate knowledge of stage effect. Among the most constant attendants were two high-born and high-bred gentlemen, closely bound together by friendship, but of widely different characters and habits; Bennet Langton, distinguished by his skill in Greek literature, by the orthodoxy of his opinions, and by the sanctity of his life; and Topham Beauclerk, renowned for his amours, his knowledge of the gay world, his fastidious taste, and his sarcastic wit. To predominate over such a society was not easy. Yet even over such a society Johnson predominated. Burke might indeed have disputed the supremacy to which others were under the necessity of submitting. But Burke, though not generally a very patient listener, was content to take the second part when Johnson was present; and the club itself, consisting of so many eminent men, is to this day popularly designated as Johnson's Club.

Among the members of this celebrated body was one to whom it has owed the greater part of its celebrity, yet who was regarded with little respect by his brethren, and had not without difficulty obtained a seat among them. This was James Boswell, a young Scotch lawyer, heir to an honourable name and a fair estate. That he was a coxcomb and a bore, weak, vain, pushing, curious, garrulous, was obvious to all who were acquainted with him. That he could not reason, that he had no wit, no humour, no eloquence, is apparent from his writings. And yet his writings are read beyond the Mississippi, and under the Southern Cross, and are likely to be read as long as the English exists, either as a living or as a dead language. Nature had made him a slave and an idolater. His mind resembled those creepers which the botanists call parasites, and which can subsist only by clinging round the stems and imbibing the juices of stronger plants. He must have fastened himself on somebody. He might have fastened himself on Wilkes, and have become the fiercest patriot in the Bill of Rights Society. He might have fastened himself on Whitfield, and have become the loudest field preacher among the Calvinistic Methodists. In a happy hour he fastened himself on Johnson. The pair might seem ill matched. For Johnson had early been prejudiced against Boswell's country. To a man of Johnson's strong understanding and irritable temper, the silly egotism and adulation of Boswell must have been as teasing as the constant buzz of a fly. Johnson hated to be questioned; and Boswell was eternally catechising him on all kinds of subjects, and sometimes propounded such questions as "What would you do, sir, if you were locked up in a tower with a baby?" Johnson was a water drinker; and Boswell was a wine-bibber, and indeed little better than a habitual sot. It was impossible that there should be perfect harmony between two such companions. Indeed, the great man was sometimes provoked into fits of passion in which he said things which the small man, during a few hours, seriously resented. Every quarrel, however, was soon made up. During twenty years the disciple continued to worship the master: the master continued to scold the disciple, to sneer at him, and to love him. The two friends ordinarily resided at a great distance from each other. Boswell practised in the Parliament House of Edinburgh, and could pay only occasional visits to London. During those visits his chief business was to watch Johnson, to discover all Johnson's habits, to turn the conversation to subjects about which Johnson was likely to say something remarkable, and to fill quarto note books with minutes of what Johnson had said. In this way were gathered the materials out of which was afterwards constructed the most interesting biographical work in the world.

Soon after the club began to exist, Johnson formed a connection less important indeed to his fame, but much more important to his happiness, than his connection with Boswell. Henry Thrale, one of the most opulent brewers in the kingdom, a man of sound and cultivated understanding, rigid principles, and liberal spirit, was married to one of those clever, kind-hearted, engaging, vain, pert young women, who are perpetually doing or saying what is not exactly right, but who, do or say what they may, are always agreeable. In 1765 the Thrales became acquainted with Johnson; and the acquaintance ripened fast into friendship. They were astonished and delighted by the brilliancy of his conversation. They were flattered by finding that a man so widely celebrated, preferred their house to any other in London. Even the peculiarities which seemed to unfit him for civilised society, his gesticulations, his rollings, his puffings, his mutterings, the strange way in which he put on his clothes, the ravenous eagerness with which he devoured his dinner, his fits of melancholy, his fits of anger, his frequent rudeness, his occasional ferocity, increased the interest which his new associates took in him. For these things were the cruel marks left behind by a life which had been one long conflict with disease and with adversity. In a vulgar hack writer such oddities would have excited only disgust. But in a man of genius, learning, and virtue their effect was to add pity to admiration and esteem. Johnson soon had an apartment at the brewery in Southwark, and a still more pleasant apartment at the villa of his friends on Streatham Common. A large part of every year he passed in those abodes, abodes which must have seemed magnificent and luxurious indeed, when compared with the dens in which he had generally been lodged. But his chief pleasures were derived from what the astronomer of his Abyssinian tale called "the endearing elegance of female friendship." Mrs Thrale rallied him, soothed him, coaxed him, and, if she sometimes provoked him by her flippancy, made ample amends by listening to his reproofs with angelic sweetness of temper. When he was diseased in body and in mind, she was the most tender of nurses. No comfort that wealth could purchase, no contrivance that womanly ingenuity, set to work by womanly compassion, could devise, was wanting to his sick-room. He requited her kindness by an affection pure as the affection of a father, yet delicately tinged with a gallantry, which, though awkward, must have been more flattering than the attentions of a crowd of the fools who gloried in the names, now obsolete, of Buck and Maccaroni. It should seem that a full half of Johnson's life, during about sixteen years, was passed under the roof of the Thrales. He accompanied the family sometimes to Bath, and sometimes to Brighton, once to Wales, and once to Paris. But he had at the same time a house in one of the narrow and gloomy courts on the north of Fleet Street. In the garrets was his library, a large and miscellaneous collection of books, falling to pieces and begrimed with dust. On a lower floor he sometimes, but very rarely, regaled a friend with a plain dinner, a veal pie, or a leg of lamb and spinage, and a rice pudding. Nor was the dwelling uninhabited during his long absences. It was the home of the most extraordinary assemblage of inmates that ever was brought together. At the head of the establishment Johnson had placed an old lady named Williams, whose chief recommendations were her blindness and her poverty. But, in spite of her murmurs and reproaches, he gave an asylum to another lady who was as poor as herself, Mrs Desmoulins, whose family he had known many years before in Staffordshire. Room was found for the daughter of Mrs Desmoulins, and for another destitute damsel, who was generally addressed as Miss Carmichael, but whom her generous host called Polly. An old quack doctor named Levett, who bled and dosed coal-heavers and hackney coachmen, and received for fees crusts of bread, bits of bacon, glasses of gin, and sometimes a little copper, completed this strange menagerie. All these poor creatures were at constant war with each other, and with Johnson's negro servant Frank. Sometimes, indeed, they transferred their hostilities from the servant to the master, complained that a better table was not kept for them, and railed or maundered till their benefactor was glad to make his escape to Streatham, or to the Mitre Tavern. And yet he, who was generally the haughtiest and most irritable of mankind, who was but too prompt to resent anything which looked like a slight on the part of a purse-proud bookseller, or of a noble and powerful patron, bore patiently from mendicants, who, but for his bounty, must have gone to the workhouse, insults more provoking than those for which he had knocked down Osborne and bidden defiance to Chesterfield. Year after year Mrs Desmoulins, Polly, and Levett, continued to torment him and to live upon him.

The course of life which has been described was interrupted in Johnson's sixty-fourth year by an important event. He had early read an account of the Hebrides, and had been much interested by learning that there was so near him a land peopled by a race which was still as rude and simple as in the middle ages. A wish to become intimately acquainted with a state of society so utterly unlike all that he had ever seen frequently crossed his mind. But it is not probable that his curiosity would have overcome his habitual sluggishness, and his love of the smoke, the mud, and the cries of London, had not Boswell importuned him to attempt the adventure, and offered to be his squire. At length, in August 1773, Johnson crossed the Highland line, and plunged courageously into what was then considered, by most Englishmen, as a dreary and perilous wilderness. After wandering about two months through the Celtic region, sometimes in rude boats which did not protect him from the rain, and sometimes on small shaggy ponies which could hardly bear his weight, he returned to his old haunts with a mind full of new images and new theories. During the following year he employed himself in recording his adventures. About the beginning of 1775, his Journey to the Hebrides was published, and was, during some weeks, the chief subject of conversation in all circles in which any attention was paid to literature. The book is still read with pleasure. The narrative is entertaining; the speculations, whether sound or unsound, are always ingenious; and the style, though too stiff and pompous, is somewhat easier and more graceful than that of his early writings. His prejudice against the Scotch had at length become little more than matter of jest; and whatever remained of the old feeling had been effectually removed by the kind and respectful hospitality with which he had been received in every part of Scotland. It was, of course, not to be expected that an Oxonian Tory should praise the Presbyterian polity and ritual, or that an eye accustomed to the hedgerows and parks of England should not be struck by the bareness of Berwickshire and East Lothian. But even in censure Johnson's tone is not unfriendly. The most enlightened Scotchmen, with Lord Mansfield at their head, were well pleased. But some foolish and ignorant Scotchmen were moved to anger by a little unpalatable truth which was mingled with much eulogy, and assailed him whom they chose to consider as the enemy of their country with libels much more dishonourable to their country than anything that he had ever said or written. They published paragraphs in the newspapers, articles in the magazines, sixpenny pamphlets, five-shilling books. One scribbler abused Johnson for being blear-eyed; another for being a pensioner; a third informed the world that one of the Doctor's uncles had been convicted of felony in Scotland, and had found that there was in that country one tree capable of supporting the weight of an Englishman. Macpherson, whose Fingal had been proved in the Journey to be an impudent forgery, threatened to take vengeance with a cane. The only effect of this threat was that Johnson reiterated the charge of forgery in the most contemptuous terms, and walked about, during some time, with a cudgel, which, if the impostor had not been too wise to encounter it, would assuredly have descended upon him, to borrow the sublime language of his own epic poem, "like a hammer on the red son of the furnace."

Of other assailants Johnson took no notice whatever. He had early resolved never to be drawn into controversy; and he adhered to his resolution with a steadfastness which is the more extraordinary, because he was, both intellectually and morally, of the stuff of which controversialists are made. In conversation, he was a singularly eager, acute, and pertinacious disputant. When at a loss for good reasons, he had recourse to sophistry; and, when heated by altercation, he made unsparing use of sarcasm and invective. But, when he took his pen in his hand, his whole character seemed to be changed. A hundred bad writers misrepresented him and reviled him; but not one of the hundred could boast of having been thought by him worthy of a refutation, or even of a retort. The Kenricks, Campbells, MacNicols, and Hendersons, did their best to annoy him, in the hope that he would give them importance by answering them. But the reader will in vain search his works for any allusion to Kenrick or Campbell, to MacNicol or Henderson. One Scotchman, bent on vindicating the fame of Scotch learning, defied him to the combat in a detestable Latin hexameter.

"Maxime, si tu vis, cupio contendere tecum."

But Johnson took no notice of the challenge. He had learned, both from his own observation and from literary history, in which he was deeply read, that the place of books in the public estimation is fixed, not by what is written about them, but by what is written in them; and that an author whose works are likely to live is very unwise if he stoops to wrangle with detractors whose works are certain to die. He always maintained that fame was a shuttlecock which could be kept up only by being beaten back, as well as beaten forward, and which would soon fall if there were only one battledore. No saying was oftener in his mouth than that fine apophthegm of Bentley, that no man was ever written down but by himself.

Unhappily, a few months after the appearance of the Journey to the Hebrides, Johnson did what none of his envious assailants could have done, and to a certain extent succeeded in writing himself down. The disputes between England and her American colonies had reached a point at which no amicable adjustment was possible. Civil war was evidently impending; and the ministers seem to have thought that the eloquence of Johnson might with advantage be employed to inflame the nation against the opposition here, and against the rebels beyond the Atlantic. He had already written two or three tracts in defence of the foreign and domestic policy of the government; and those tracts, though hardly worthy of him, were much superior to the crowd of pamphlets which lay on the counters of Almon and Stockdale. But his Taxation No Tyranny was a pitiable failure. The very title was a silly phrase, which can have been recommended to his choice by nothing but a jingling alliteration which he ought to have despised. The arguments were such as boys use in debating societies. The pleasantry was as awkward as the gambols of a hippopotamus. Even Boswell was forced to own that, in this unfortunate piece, he could detect no trace of his master's powers. The general opinion was that the strong faculties which had produced the Dictionary and the Rambler were beginning to feel the effect of time and of disease, and that the old man would best consult his credit by writing no more.

But this was a great mistake. Johnson had failed, not because his mind was less vigorous than when he wrote Rasselas in the evenings of a week, but because he had foolishly chosen, or suffered others to choose for him, a subject such as he would at no time have been competent to treat. He was in no sense a statesman. He never willingly read or thought or talked about affairs of state. He loved biography, literary history, the history of manners; but political history was positively distasteful to him. The question at issue between the colonies and the mother country was a question about which he had really nothing to say. He failed, therefore, as the greatest men must fail when they attempt to do that for which they are unfit; as Burke would have failed if Burke had tried to write comedies like those of Sheridan; as Reynolds would have failed if Reynolds had tried to paint landscapes like those of Wilson. Happily, Johnson soon had an opportunity of proving most signally that his failure was not to be ascribed to intellectual decay.

On Easter Eve 1777, some persons, deputed by a meeting which consisted of forty of the first booksellers in London, called upon him. Though he had some scruples about doing business at that season, he received his visitors with much civility. They came to inform him that a new edition of the English poets, from Cowley downwards, was in contemplation, and to ask him to furnish short biographical prefaces. He readily undertook the task, a task for which he was pre-eminently qualified. His knowledge of the literary history of England since the Restoration was unrivalled. That knowledge he had derived partly from books, and partly from sources which had long been closed; from old Grub Street traditions; from the talk of forgotten poetasters and pamphleteers who had long been lying in parish vaults; from the recollections of such men as Gilbert Walmesley, who had conversed with the wits of Button; Cibber, who had mutilated the plays of two generations of dramatists; Orrery, who had been admitted to the society of Swift; and Savage, who had rendered services of no very honourable kind to Pope. The biographer therefore sate down to his task with a mind full of matter. He had at first intended to give only a paragraph to every minor poet, and only four or five pages to the greatest name. But the flood of anecdote and criticism overflowed the narrow channel. The work, which was originally meant to consist only of a few sheets, swelled into ten volumes, small volumes, it is true, and not closely printed. The first four appeared in 1779, the remaining six in 1781.

The Lives of the Poets are, on the whole, the best of Johnson's works. The narratives are as entertaining as any novel. The remarks on life and on human nature are eminently shrewd and profound. The criticisms are often excellent, and, even when grossly and provokingly unjust, well deserve to be studied. For, however erroneous they may be, they are never silly. They are the judgments of a mind trammelled by prejudice and deficient in sensibility, but vigorous and acute. They therefore generally contain a portion of valuable truth which deserves to be separated from the alloy; and, at the very worst, they mean something, a praise to which much of what is called criticism in our time has no pretensions.

Savage's Life Johnson reprinted nearly as it had appeared in 1744. Whoever, after reading that life, will turn to the other lives will be struck by the difference of style. Since Johnson had been at ease in his circumstances he had written little and had talked much. When, therefore, he, after the lapse of years, resumed his pen, the mannerism which he had contracted while he was in the constant habit of elaborate composition was less perceptible than formerly; and his diction frequently had a colloquial ease which it had formerly wanted. The improvement may be discerned by a skilful critic in the Journey to the Hebrides, and in the Lives of the Poets is so obvious that it cannot escape the notice of the most careless reader.

Among the lives the best are perhaps those of Cowley, Dryden, and Pope. The very worst is, beyond all doubt, that of Gray.

This great work at once became popular. There was, indeed, much just and much unjust censure: but even those who were loudest in blame were attracted by the book in spite of themselves. Malone computed the gains of the publishers at five or six thousand pounds. But the writer was very poorly remunerated. Intending at first to write very short prefaces, he had stipulated for only two hundred guineas. The booksellers, when they saw how far his performance had surpassed his promise, added only another hundred. Indeed, Johnson, though he did not despise, or affect to despise, money, and though his strong sense and long experience ought to have qualified him to protect his own interests, seems to have been singularly unskilful and unlucky in his literary bargains. He was generally reputed the first English writer of his time. Yet several writers of his time sold their copyrights for sums such as he never ventured to ask. To give a single instance, Robertson received four thousand five hundred pounds for the History of Charles V.; and it is no disrespect to the memory of Robertson to say that the History of Charles V. is both a less valuable and a less amusing book than the Lives of the Poets.

Johnson was now in his seventy-second year. The infirmities of age were coming fast upon him. That inevitable event of which he never thought without horror was brought near to him; and his whole life was darkened by the shadow of death. He had often to pay the cruel price of longevity. Every year he lost what could never be replaced. The strange dependents to whom he had given shelter, and to whom, in spite of their faults, he was strongly attached by habit, dropped off one by one; and, in the silence of his home, he regretted even the noise of their scolding matches. The kind and generous Thrale was no more; and it would have been well if his wife had been laid beside him. But she survived to be the laughing-stock of those who had envied her, and to draw from the eyes of the old man who had loved her beyond anything in the world tears far more bitter than he would have shed over her grave. With some estimable and many agreeable qualities, she was not made to be independent. The control of a mind more steadfast than her own was necessary to her respectability. While she was restrained by her husband, a man of sense and firmness, indulgent to her taste in trifles, but always the undisputed master of his house, her worst offences had been impertinent jokes, white lies, and short fits of pettishness ending in sunny good humour. But he was gone ; and she was left an opulent widow of forty, with strong sensibility, volatile fancy, and slender judgment. She soon fell in love with a music-master from Brescia, in whom nobody but herself could discover anything to admire. Her pride, and perhaps some better feelings, struggled hard against this degrading passion. But the struggle irritated her nerves, soured her temper, and at length endangered her health. Conscious that her choice was one which Johnson could not approve, she became desirous to escape from his inspection. Her manner towards him changed. She was sometimes cold and sometimes petulant. She did not conceal her joy when he left Streatham ; she never pressed him to return ; and, if he came unbidden, she received him in a manner which convinced him that he was no longer a welcome guest. He took the very intelligible hints which she gave. He read, for the last time, a chapter of the Greek Testament in the library which had been formed by himself. In a solemn and tender prayer he commended the house and its inmates to the Divine protection, and, with emotions which choked his voice and convulsed his powerful frame, left for ever that beloved home for the gloomy and desolate house behind Fleet Street, where the few and evil days which still remained to him were to run out. Here, in June 1783, he had a paralytic stroke, from which, however, he recovered, and which does not appear to have at all impaired his intellectual faculties. But other maladies came thick upon him. His asthma tormented him day and night. Dropsical symptoms made their appearance. While sinking under a complication of diseases, he heard that the woman whose friendship had been the chief happiness of sixteen years of his life had married an Italian fiddler ; that all London was crying shame upon her ; and that the newspapers and magazines were filled with allusions to the Ephesian matron, and the two pictures in Hamlet. He vehemently said that he would try to forget her existence. He never uttered her name. Every memorial of her which met his eye he flung into the fire. She meanwhile fled from the laughter and hisses of her countrymen and countrywomen to a land where she was unknown, hastened across Mount Cenis, and learned, while passing a merry Christmas of concerts and lemonade parties at Milan, that the great man with whose name hers is inseparably associated had ceased to exist.

He had, in spite of much mental and much bodily affliction, clung vehemently to life. The feeling described in that fine but gloomy paper which closes the series of his Idlers seemed to grow stronger in him as his last hour drew near. He fancied that he should be able to draw his breath more easily in a southern climate, and would probably have set out for Rome and Naples, but for his fear of the expense of the journey. That expense, indeed, he had the means of defraying ; for he had laid up about two thousand pounds, the fruit of labours which had made the fortune of several publishers. But he was unwilling to break in upon this hoard ; and he seems to have wished even to keep its existence a secret. Some of his friends hoped that the government might be induced to increase his pension to six hundred pounds a year ; but this hope was disappointed ; and he resolved to stand one English winter more. That winter was his last. His legs grew weaker ; his breath grew shorter ; the fatal water gathered fast, in spite of incisions which he, courageous against pain, but timid against death, urged his surgeons to make deeper and deeper. Though the tender care which had mitigated his sufferings during months of sickness at Streatham was withdrawn, he was not left desolate. The ablest physicians and surgeons attended him, and refused to accept fees from him. Burke parted from him with deep emotion. Windham sate much in the sick room, arranged the pillows, and sent his own servant to watch a night by the bed. Frances Burney, whom the old man had cherished with fatherly kindness, stood weeping at the door ; while Langton, whose piety eminently qualified him to be an adviser and comforter at such a time, received the last pressure of his friend's hand within. When at length the moment, dreaded through so many years, came close, the dark cloud passed away from Johnson's mind. His temper became unusually patient and gentle ; he ceased to think with terror of death, and of that which lies beyond death ; and he spoke much of the mercy of God, and of the propitiation of Christ. In this serene frame of mind he died on the 13th of December 1784. He was laid, a week later, in Westminster Abbey, among the eminent men of whom he had been the historian,—Cowley and Denham, Dryden and Congreve, Gay, Prior, and Addison.

Since his death the popularity of his works—the Lives of the Poets, and, perhaps, the Vanity of Human Wishes, excepted—has greatly diminished. His Dictionary has been altered by editors till it can scarcely be called his. An allusion to his Rambler or his Idler is not readily apprehended in literary circles. The fame even of Rasselas has grown somewhat dim. But, though the celebrity of the writings may have declined, the celebrity of the writer, strange to say, is as great as ever. Boswell's book has done for him more than the best of his own books could do. The memory of other authors is kept alive by their works. But the memory of Johnson keeps many of his works alive. The old philosopher is still among us in the brown coat with the metal buttons and the shirt which ought to be at wash, blinking, puffing, rolling his head, drumming with his fingers, tearing his meat like a tiger, and swallowing his tea in oceans. No human being who has been more than seventy years in the grave is so well known to us. And it is but just to say that our intimate acquaintance with what he would himself have called the anfractuosities of his intellect and of his temper serves only to strengthen our conviction that he was both a great and a good man.

WILLIAM PITT.

(JANUARY 1859.)

WILLIAM PITT, the second son of William Pitt, Earl of Chatham, and of Lady Hester Granville, daughter of Hester Countess Temple, was born on the 28th of May 1759. The child inherited a name which, at the time of his birth, was the most illustrious in the civilised world, and was pronounced by every Englishman with pride, and by every enemy of England with mingled admiration and terror. During the first year of his life, every month had its illuminations and bonfires, and every wind brought some messenger charged with joyful tidings and hostile standards. In Westphalia the English infantry won a great battle which arrested the armies of Louis the Fifteenth in the midst of a career of conquest; Boscawen defeated one French fleet on the coast of Portugal; Hawke put to flight another in the Bay of Biscay; Johnson took Niagara; Amherst took Ticonderoga; Wolfe died by the most enviable of deaths under the walls of Quebec; Clive destroyed a Dutch armament in the Hooghly, and established the English supremacy in Bengal; Coote routed Lally at Wandewash, and established the English supremacy in the Carnatic. The nation, while loudly applauding the successful warriors, considered them all, on sea and on land, in Europe, in America, and in Asia, merely as instruments which received their direction from one superior mind. It was the great William Pitt, the great commoner, who had vanquished French marshals in Germany, and French admirals on the Atlantic; who had conquered for his country one great empire on the frozen shores of Ontario, and another under the tropical sun near the mouths of the Ganges. It was not in the nature of things that popularity such as he at this time enjoyed should be permanent. That popularity had lost its gloss before his children were old enough to understand that their father was a great man. He was at length placed in situations in which neither his talents for administration nor his talents for debate appeared to the best advantage. The energy and decision which had eminently fitted him for the direction of war were not needed in time of peace. The lofty and spirit-stirring eloquence which had made him supreme in the House of Commons often fell dead on the House of Lords. A cruel malady racked his joints, and left his joints only to fall on his nerves and on his brain. During the closing years of his life, he was odious to the court, and yet was not on cordial terms with the great body of the opposition. Chatham was only the ruin of Pitt, but an awful and majestic ruin, not to be contemplated by any man of sense and feeling without emotions resembling those which are excited by the remains of the Parthenon and of the Coliseum. In one respect the old statesman was eminently happy. Whatever might be the vicissitudes of his public life, he never failed to find peace and love by his own hearth. He loved all his children, and was loved by them; and, of all his children, the one of whom he was fondest and proudest was his second son.

The child's genius and ambition displayed themselves with a rare and almost unnatural precocity. At seven, the interest which he took in grave subjects, the ardour with which he pursued his studies, and the sense and vivacity of his remarks on books and on events, amazed his parents and instructors. One of his sayings of this date was reported to his mother by his tutor. In August 1766, when the world was agitated by the news that Mr Pitt had become Earl of Chatham, little William exclaimed, "I am glad that I am not the eldest son. I want to speak in the House of Commons like papa." A letter is extant in which Lady Chatham, a woman of considerable abilities, remarked to her lord, that their younger son at twelve had left far behind him his elder brother, who was fifteen. "The fineness," she wrote, "of William's mind makes him enjoy with the greatest pleasure what would be above the reach of any other creature of his small age." At fourteen the lad was in intellect a man. Hayley, who met him at Lyme in the summer of 1773, was astonished, delighted, and somewhat overawed, by hearing wit and wisdom from so young a mouth. The poet, indeed, was afterwards sorry that his shyness had prevented him from submitting the plan of an extensive literary work, which he was then meditating, to the judgment of this extraordinary boy. The boy, indeed, had already written a tragedy, bad of course, but not worse than the tragedies of his friend. This piece is still preserved at Chevening, and is in some respects highly curious. There is no love. The whole plot is political; and it is remarkable that the interest, such as it is, turns on a contest about a regency. On one side is a faithful servant of the Crown, on the other an ambitious and unprincipled conspirator. At length the King, who had been missing, reappears, resumes his power, and rewards the faithful defender of his rights. A reader who should judge only by internal evidence would have no hesitation in pronouncing that the play was written by some Pittite poetaster at the time of the rejoicings for the recovery of George the Third in 1789.

The pleasure with which William's parents observed the rapid development of his intellectual powers was alloyed by apprehensions about his health. He shot up alarmingly fast; he was often ill, and always weak; and it was feared that it would be impossible to rear a stripling so tall, so slender, and so feeble. Port wine was prescribed by his medical advisers: and it is said that he was, at fourteen, accustomed to take this agreeable physic in quantities which would, in our abstemious age, be thought much more than sufficient for any full-grown man. This regimen, though it would probably have killed ninety-nine boys out of a hundred, seems to have been well suited to the peculiarities of William's constitution; for at fifteen he ceased to be molested by disease, and, though never a strong man, continued, during many years of labour and anxiety, of nights passed in debate and of summers passed in London, to be a tolerably healthy one. It was probably on account of the delicacy of his frame that he was not educated like other boys of the same rank. Almost all the eminent English statesmen and orators to whom he was afterwards opposed or allied, North, Fox, Shelburne, Windham, Grey, Wellesley, Grenville, Sheridan, Canning, went through the training of great public schools. Lord Chatham had himself been a distinguished Etonian: and it is seldom that a distinguished Etonian forgets his obligations to Eton. But William's infirmities required a vigilance and tenderness such as could be found only at home. He was therefore bred under the paternal roof. His studies were superintended by a clergyman named Wilson; and those studies, though often interrupted by illness, were prosecuted with extraordinary success. Before the lad had completed his fifteenth year, his knowledge both of the ancient languages and of mathematics was such as very few men of eighteen then carried up to college. He was therefore sent, towards the close of the year 1773, to Pembroke Hall, in the university of Cambridge. So young a student required much more than the ordinary care which a college tutor bestows on undergraduates. The governor, to whom the direction of William's academical life was confided, was a bachelor of arts named Pretyman, who had been senior wrangler in the preceding year, and who, though not a man of prepossessing appearance or brilliant parts, was eminently acute and laborious, a sound scholar, and an excellent geometrician. At Cambridge, Pretyman was, during more than two years, the inseparable campanion, and indeed almost the only companion of his pupil. A close and lasting friendship sprang up between the pair. The disciple was able, before he completed his twenty-eighth year, to make his preceptor Bishop of Lincoln and Dean of St Paul's; and the preceptor showed his gratitude by writing a life of the disciple, which enjoys the distinction of being the worst biographical work of its size in the world.

Pitt, till he graduated, had scarcely one acquaintance, attended chapel regularly morning and evening, dined every day in hall, and never went to a single evening party. At seventeen, he was admitted, after the bad fashion of those times, by right of birth, without any examination, to the degree of the Master of Arts. But he continued during some years to reside at college, and to apply himself vigorously, under Pretyman's direction, to the studies of the place, while mixing freely in the best academic society.

The stock of learning which Pitt laid in during this part of his life was certainly very extraordinary. In fact, it was all that he ever possessed; for he very early became too busy to have any spare time for books. The work in which he took the greatest delight was Newton's Principia. His liking for mathematics, indeed, amounted to a passion, which, in the opinion of his instructors, themselves distinguished mathematicians, required to be checked rather than encouraged. The acuteness and readiness with which he solved problems was pronounced by one of the ablest of the moderators, who in those days presided over the disputations in the schools, and conducted the examinations of the Senate House, to be unrivalled in the university. Nor was the youth's proficiency in classical learning less remarkable. In one respect, indeed, he appeared to disadvantage when compared with even second-rate and third-rate men from public schools. He had never, while under Wilson's care, been in the habit of composing in the ancient languages: and he therefore never acquired that knack of versification which is sometimes possessed by clever boys whose knowledge of the language and literature of Greece and Rome is very superficial. It would have been utterly out of his power to produce such charming elegiac lines as those in which Wellesley bade farewell to Eton, or such Virgilian hexameters as those in which Canning described the pilgrimage to Mecca. But it may be doubted whether any scholar has ever, at twenty, had a more solid and profound knowledge of the two great tongues of the old civilised world. The facility with which he penetrated the meaning of the most intricate sentences in the Attic writers astonished veteran critics. He had set his heart on being intimately acquainted with all the extant poetry of Greece, and was not satisfied till he had mastered Lycophron's Cassandra, the most obscure work in the whole range of ancient literature. This strange rhapsody, the difficulties of which have perplexed and repelled many excellent scholars, "he read," says his preceptor, "with an ease at first sight, which, if I had not witnessed it, I should have thought beyond the compass of human intellect."

To modern literature Pitt paid comparatively little attention. He knew no living language except French; and French he knew very imperfectly. With a few of the best English writers he was intimate, particularly with Shakspeare and Milton. The debate in Pandemonium was, as it well deserved to be, one of his favourite passages; and his early friends used to talk, long after his death, of the just emphasis and the melodious cadence with which they had heard him recite the incomparable speech of Belial. He had indeed been carefully trained from infancy in the art of managing his voice, a voice naturally clear and deep-toned. His father, whose oratory owed no small part of its effect to that art, had been a most skilful and judicious instructor. At a later period, the wits of Brookes's, irritated by observing, night after night, how powerfully Pitt's sonorous elocution fascinated the rows of country gentlemen, reproached him with having been "taught by his dad on a stool."

His education, indeed, was well adapted to form a great parliamentary speaker. One argument often urged against those classical studies which occupy so large a part of the early life of every gentleman bred in the south of our island is, that they prevent him from acquiring a command of his mother tongue, and that is not unusual to meet with a youth of excellent parts, who writes Ciceronian Latin prose and Horatian Latin Alcaics, but who would find it impossible to express his thoughts in pure, perspicuous, and forcible English. There may perhaps be some truth in this observation. But the classical studies of Pitt were carried on in a peculiar manner, and had the effect of enriching his English vocabulary, and of making him wonderfully expert in the art of constructing correct English sentences. His practice was to look over a page or two of a Greek or Latin author, to make himself master of the meaning, and then to read the passage straightforward into his own language. This practice, begun under his first teacher Wilson, was continued under Pretyman. It is not strange that a young man of great abilities, who had been exercised daily in this way during ten years, should have acquired an almost unrivalled power of putting his thoughts, without premeditation, into words well selected and well arranged.

Of all the remains of antiquity, the orations were those on which he bestowed the most minute examination. His favourite employment was to compare harangues on opposite sides of the same question, to analyse them, and to observe which of the arguments of the first speaker were refuted by the second, which were evaded, and which were left untouched. Nor was it only in books that he at this time studied the art of parliamentary fencing. When he was at home, he had frequent opportunities of hearing important debates at Westminster; and he heard them, not only with interest and enjoyment, but with a close scientific attention resembling that with which a diligent pupil at Guy's Hospital watches every turn of the hand of a great surgeon through a difficult operation. On one of these occasions, Pitt, a youth whose abilities were as yet known only to his own family and to a small knot of college friends, was introduced on the steps of the throne in the House of Lords to Fox, who was his senior by eleven years, and who was already the greatest debater, and one of the greatest orators, that had appeared in England. Fox used afterwards to relate that, as the discussion proceeded, Pitt repeatedly turned to him, and said, "But surely, Mr Fox, that might be met thus;" or, "Yes; but he lays himself open to this retort." What the particular criticisms were Fox had forgotten; but he said that he was much struck at the time by the precocity of a lad who, through the whole sitting, seemed to be thinking only how all the speeches on both sides could be answered.

One of the young man's visits to the House of Lords was a sad and memorable era in his life. He had not quite completed his nineteenth year, when, on the 7th of April 1778, he attended his father to Westminster. A great debate was expected. It was known that France had recognised the independence of the United States. The Duke of Richmond was about to declare his opinion that all thought of subjugating those states ought to be relinquished. Chatham had always maintained that the resistance of the colonies to the mother country was justifiable. But he conceived, very erroneously, that on the day on which their independence should be acknowledged the greatness of England would be at an end. Though sinking under the weight of years and infirmities, he determined, in spite of the entreaties of his family, to be in his place. His son supported him to a seat. The excitement and exertion were too much for the old man. In the very act of addressing the peers, he fell back in convulsions. A few weeks later his corpse was borne, with gloomy pomp, from the Painted Chamber to the Abbey. The favourite child and namesake of the deceased statesman followed the coffin as chief mourner, and saw it deposited in the transept where his own was destined to lie.

His elder brother, now Earl of Chatham, had means sufficient, and barely sufficient, to support the dignity of the peerage. The other members of the family were poorly provided for. William had little more than three hundred a year. It was necessary for him to follow a profession. He had already begun to eat his terms. In the spring of 1780 he came of age. He then quitted Cambridge, was called to the bar, took chambers in Lincoln's Inn, and joined the western circuit. In the autumn of that year a general election took place; and he offered himself as a candidate for the university; but he was at the bottom of the poll. It is said that the grave doctors, who then sate robed in scarlet, on the benches of Golgotha, thought it great presumption in so young a man to solicit so high a distinction. He was, however, at the request of a hereditary friend, the Duke of Rutland, brought into Parliament by Sir James Lowther for the borough of Appleby.

The dangers of the country were at that time such as might well have disturbed even a constant mind. Army after army had been sent in vain against the rebellious colonists of North America. On pitched fields of battle the advantage had been with the disciplined troops of the mother country. But it was not on pitched fields of battle that the event of such a contest could be decided. An armed nation, with hunger and the Atlantic for auxiliaries, was not to be subjugated. Meanwhile the House of Bourbon, humbled to the dust a few years before by the genius and vigour of Chatham, had seized the opportunity of revenge. France and Spain were united against us, and had recently been joined by Holland. The command of the Mediterranean had been for a time lost. The British flag had been scarcely able to maintain itself in the British Channel. The northern powers professed neutrality; but their neutrality had a menacing aspect. In the East, Hyder had descended on the Carnatic, had destroyed the little army of Baillie, and had spread terror even to the ramparts of Fort Saint George. The discontents of Ireland threatened nothing less than civil war. In England the authority of the government had sunk to the lowest point. The King and the House of Commons were alike unpopular. The cry for parliamentary reform was scarcely less loud and vehement than in the autumn of 1830. Formidable associations, headed, not by ordinary demagogues, but by men of high rank, stainless character, and distinguished ability, demanded a revision of the representative system. The populace, emboldened by the impotence and irresolution of the government, had recently broken loose from all restraint, besieged the chambers of the legislature, hustled peers, hunted bishops, attacked the residences of ambassadors, opened prisons, burned and pulled down houses. London had presented during some days the aspect of a city taken by storm; and it had been necessary to form a camp among the trees of Saint James's Park.

In spite of dangers and difficulties abroad and at home, George the Third, with a firmness which had little affinity with virtue or with wisdom, persisted in his determination to put down the American rebels by force of arms; and his ministers submitted their judgment to his. Some of them were probably actuated merely by selfish cupidity; but their chief, Lord North, a man of high honour, amiable temper, winning manners, lively wit, and excellent talents both for business and for debate, must be acquitted of all sordid motives. He remained at a post from which he had long wished and had repeatedly tried to escape, only because he had not sufficient fortitude to resist the entreaties and reproaches of the King, who silenced all arguments by passionately asking whether any gentleman, any man of spirit, could have the heart to desert a kind master in the hour of extremity.

The opposition consisted of two parties which had once been hostile to each other, and which had been very slowly, and, as it soon appeared, very imperfectly reconciled, but which at this conjuncture seemed to act together with cordiality. The larger of these parties consisted of the great body of the Whig aristocracy. Its head was Charles, Marquess of Rockingham, a man of sense and virtue, and in wealth and parliamentary interest equalled by very few of the English nobles, but afflicted with a nervous timidity which prevented him from taking a prominent part in debate. In the House of Commons, the adherents of Rockingham were led by Fox, whose dissipated habits and ruined fortunes were the talk of the whole town, but whose commanding genius, and whose sweet, generous, and affectionate disposition, extorted the admiration and love of those who most lamented the errors of his private life. Burke, superior to Fox in largeness of comprehension, in extent of knowledge, and in splendour of imagination, but less skilled in that kind of logic and in that kind of rhetoric which convince and persuade great assemblies, was willing to be the lieutenant of a young chief who might have been his son.

A smaller section of the opposition was composed of the old followers of Chatham. At their head was William, Earl of Shelburne, distinguished both as a statesman and as a lover of science and letters. With him were leagued Lord Camden, who had formerly held the Great Seal, and whose integrity, ability, and constitutional knowledge commanded the public respect; Barré, an eloquent and acrimonious declaimer; and Dunning, who had long held the first place at the English bar. It was to this party that Pitt was naturally attracted.

On the 26th of February 1781, he made his first speech, in favour of Burke's plan of economical reform. Fox stood up at the same moment, but instantly gave way. The lofty yet animated deportment of the young member, his perfect self-possession, the readiness with which he replied to the orators who had preceded him, the silver tones of his voice, the perfect structure of his unpremeditated sentences, astonished and delighted his hearers. Burke, moved even to tears, exclaimed, "It is not a chip of the old block; it is the old block itself." "Pitt will be one of the first men in Parliament," said a member of the opposition to Fox. "He is so already," answered Fox, in whose nature envy had no place. It is a curious fact, well remembered by some who were very recently living, that soon after this debate Pitt's name was put up by Fox at Brookes's.

On two subsequent occasions during that session Pitt addressed the House, and on both fully sustained the reputation which he had acquired on his first appearance. In the summer, after the prorogation, he again went the western circuit, held several briefs, and acquitted himself in such a manner that he was highly complimented by Buller from the bench, and by Dunning at the bar.

On the 27th of November the Parliament reassembled. Only forty-eight hours before had arrived tidings of the surrender of Cornwallis and his army; and it had consequently been necessary to rewrite the royal speech. Every man in the kingdom, except the King, was now convinced that it was mere madness to think of conquering the United States. In the debate on the report of the address, Pitt spoke with even more energy and brilliancy than on any former occasion. He was warmly applauded by his allies; but it was remarked that no person on his own side of the house was so loud in eulogy as Henry Dundas, the Lord Advocate of Scotland, who spoke from the ministerial ranks. That able and versatile politician distinctly foresaw the approaching downfall of the government with which he was connected, and was preparing to make his own escape from the ruin. From that night dates his connection with Pitt, a connection which soon became a close intimacy, and which lasted till it was dissolved by death.

About a fortnight later, Pitt spoke in the committee of supply on the army estimates. Symptoms of dissension had begun to appear on the Treasury bench. Lord George Germaine, the Secretary of State, who was especially charged with the direction of the war in America, had held language not easily to be reconciled with declarations made by the First Lord of the Treasury. Pitt noticed the discrepancy with much force and keenness. Lord George and Lord North began to whisper together; and Welbore Ellis, an ancient placeman who had been drawing salary almost every quarter since the days of Henry Pelham, bent down between them to put in a word. Such interruptions sometimes discompose veteran speakers. Pitt stopped, and, looking at the group, said, with admirable readiness, "I shall wait till Nestor has composed the dispute between Agamemnon and Achilles."

After several defeats, or victories hardly to be distinguished from defeats, the ministry resigned. The King, reluctantly and ungraciously, consented to accept Rockingham as first minister. Fox and Shelburne became Secretaries of State. Lord John Cavendish, one of the most upright and honourable of men, was made Chancellor of the Exchequer. Thurlow, whose abilities and force of character had made him the dictator of the House of Lords, continued to hold the great seal.

To Pitt was offered, through Shelburne, the Vice-Treasurership of Ireland, one of the easiest and most highly paid places in the gift of the crown; but the offer was, without hesitation, declined. The young statesman had resolved to accept no post which did not entitle him to a seat in the cabinet : and, in a few days later, he announced that resolution in the House of Commons. It must be remembered that the cabinet was then a much smaller and more select body than at present. We have seen cabinets of sixteen. In the time of our grandfathers a cabinet of ten or eleven was thought inconveniently large. Seven was an usual number. Even Burke, who had taken the lucrative office of paymaster, was not in the cabinet. Many therefore thought Pitt's declaration indecent. He himself was sorry that he had made it. The words, he said in private, had escaped him in the heat of speaking ; and he had no sooner uttered them than he would have given the world to recall them. They, however, did him no harm with the public. The second William Pitt, it was said, had shown that he had inherited the spirit, as well as the genius, of the first. In the son, as in the father, there might perhaps be too much pride ; but there was nothing low or sordid. It might be called arrogance in a young barrister, living in chambers on three hundred a year, to refuse a salary of five thousand a year, merely because he did not choose to bind himself to speak or vote for plans which he had no share in framing ; but surely such arrogance was not very far removed from virtue.

Pitt gave a general support to the administration of Rockingham, but omitted, in the meantime, no opportunity of courting that Ultra-Whig party which the persecution of Wilkes and the Middlesex election had called into existence, and which the disastrous events of the war, and the triumph of republican principles in America, had made formidable both in numbers and in temper. He supported a motion for shortening the duration of Parliaments. He made a motion for a committee to examine into the state of the representation, and, in the speech, by which that motion was introduced, avowed himself the enemy of the close boroughs, the strongholds of that corruption to which he attributed all the calamities of the nation, and which, as he phrased it in one of those exact and sonorous sentences of which he had a boundless command, had grown with the growth of England and strengthened with her strength, but had not diminished with her diminution or decayed with her decay. On this occasion he was supported by Fox. The motion was lost by only twenty votes in a house of more than three hundred members. The reformers never again had so good a division till the year 1831.

The new administration was strong in abilities, and was more popular than any administration which had held office since the first year of George the Third, but was hated by the King, hesitatingly supported by the Parliament, and torn by internal dissensions. The Chancellor was disliked and distrusted by almost all his colleagues. The two Secretaries of State regarded each other with no friendly feeling. The line between their departments had not been traced with precision ; and there were consequently jealousies, encroachments, and complaints. It was all that Rockingham could do to keep the peace in his cabinet ; and, before the cabinet had existed three months, Rockingham died.

In an instant all was confusion. The adherents of the deceased statesman looked on the Duke of Portland as their chief. The King placed Shelburne at the head of the Treasury. Fox, Lord John Cavendish, and Burke, immediately resigned their offices ; and the new prime minister was left to constitute a government out of very defective materials. His own parliamentary talents were great ; but he could not be in the place where parliamentary talents were most needed. It was necessary to find some member of the House of Commons who could confront the great orators of the opposition; and Pitt alone had the eloquence and the courage which were required. He was offered the great place of Chancellor of the Exchequer; and he accepted it. He had scarcely completed his twenty-third year.

The Parliament was speedily prorogued. During the recess, a negotiation for peace which had been commenced under Rockingham was brought to a successful termination. England acknowledged the independence of her revolted colonies; and she ceded to her European enemies some places in the Mediterranean and in the Gulf of Mexico. But the terms which she obtained were quite as advantageous and honourable as the events of the war entitled her to expect, or as she was likely to obtain by persevering in a contest against immense odds. All her vital parts, all the real sources of her power, remained uninjured. She preserved even her dignity: for she ceded to the House of Bourbon only part of what she had won from that House in previous wars. She retained her Indian empire undiminished; and, in spite of the mightiest efforts of two great monarchies, her flag still waved on the rock of Gibraltar. There is not the slightest reason to believe that Fox, if he had remained in office, would have hesitated one moment about concluding a treaty on such conditions. Unhappily that great and most amiable man was, at this crisis, hurried by his passions into an error which made his genius and his virtues, during a long course of years, almost useless to his country.

He saw that the great body of the House of Commons was divided into three parties, his own, that of North, and that of Shelburne; that none of those three parties was large enough to stand alone; that, therefore, unless two of them united, there must be a miserably feeble administration, or more probably, a rapid succession of miserably feeble administrations, and this at a time when a strong government was essential to the prosperity and respectability of the nation. It was then necessary and right that there should be a coalition. To every possible coalition there were objections. But, of all possible coalitions, that to which there were the fewest objections was undoubtedly a coalition between Shelburne and Fox. It would have been generally applauded by the followers of both. It might have been made without any sacrifice of public principle on the part of either. Unhappily, recent bickerings had left in the mind of Fox a profound dislike and distrust of Shelburne. Pitt attempted to mediate, and was authorised to invite Fox to return to the service of the Crown. "Is Lord Shelburne," said Fox, "to remain prime minister?" Pitt answered in the affirmative. "It is impossible that I can act under him," said Fox. "Then negotiation is at an end," said Pitt; "for I cannot betray him." Thus the two statesmen parted. They were never again in a private room together.

As Fox and his friends would not treat with Shelburne, nothing remained to them but to treat with North. That fatal coalition which is emphatically called "The Coalition" was formed. Not three quarters of a year had elapsed since Fox and Burke had threatened North with impeachment, and had described him, night after night, as the most arbitrary, the most corrupt, the most incapable of ministers. They now allied themselves with him for the purpose of driving from office a statesman with whom they cannot be said to have differed as to any important question. Nor had they even the prudence and the patience to wait for some occasion on which they might, without inconsistency, have combined with their old enemies in opposition to the government. That nothing might be wanting to the scandal, the great orators, who had, during seven years, thundered against the war, determined to join with the authors of that war in passing a vote of censure on the peace.

The Parliament met before Christmas 1782. But it was not till January 1783 that the preliminary treaties were signed. On the 17th of February they were taken into consideration by the House of Commons. There had been, during some days, floating rumours that Fox and North had coalesced; and the debate indicated but too clearly that those rumours were not unfounded. Pitt was suffering from indisposition: he did not rise till his own strength and that of his hearers were exhausted; and he was consequently less successful than on any former occasion. His admirers owned that his speech was feeble and petulant. He so far forgot himself as to advise Sheridan to confine himself to amusing theatrical audiences. This ignoble sarcasm gave Sheridan an opportunity of retorting with great felicity. "After what I have seen and heard to-night," he said, "I really feel strongly tempted to venture on a competition with so great an artist as Ben Jonson, and to bring on the stage a second Angry Boy." On a division, the address proposed by the supporters of the government was rejected by a majority of sixteen.

But Pitt was not a man to be disheartened by a single failure, or to be put down by the most lively repartee. When a few days later, the opposition proposed a resolution directly censuring the treaties, he spoke with an eloquence, energy, and dignity which raised his fame and popularity higher than ever. To the coalition of Fox and North he alluded in language which drew forth tumultuous applause from his followers. "If," he said, "this ill-omened and unnatural marriage be not yet consummated, I know of a just and lawful impediment; and, in the name of the public weal, I forbid the banns."

The ministers were again left in a minority; and Shelburne consequently tendered his resignation. It was accepted; but the King struggled long and hard before he submitted to the terms dictated by Fox, whose faults he detested, and whose high spirit and powerful intellect he detested still more. The first place at the board of Treasury was repeatedly offered to Pitt; but the offer, though tempting, was steadfastly declined. The young man, whose judgment was as precocious as his eloquence, saw that his time was coming, but was not come, and was deaf to royal importunities and reproaches. His Majesty, bitterly complaining of Pitt's faintheartedness, tried to break the coalition. Every art of seduction was practised on North, but in vain. During several weeks the country remained without a government. It was not till all devices had failed, and till the aspect of the House of Commons became threatening, that the King gave way. The Duke of Portland was declared First Lord of the Treasury. Thurlow was dismissed. Fox and North became Secretaries of State, with power ostensibly equal. But Fox was the real prime minister.

The year was far advanced before the new arrangements were completed; and nothing very important was done during the remainder of the session. Pitt, now seated on the opposition bench, brought the question of parliamentary reform a second time under the consideration of the Commons. He proposed to add to the House at once a hundred county members and several members for metropolitan districts, and to enact that every borough of which an election committee should report that the majority of voters appeared to be corrupt should lose the franchise. The motion was rejected by 293 votes to 149.

After the prorogation, Pitt visited the Continent for the first and last time. His travelling companion was one of his most intimate friends, a young man of his own age, who had already distinguished himself in Parliament by an engaging natural eloquence, set off by the sweetest and most exquisitely modulated of human voices, and whose affectionate heart, caressing manners, and brilliant wit, made him the most delightful of companions, William Wilberforce. That was the time of Anglomania in France; and at Paris the son of the great Chatham was absolutely hunted by men of letters and women of fashion, and forced, much against his will, into political disputation. One remarkable saying which dropped from him during this tour has been preserved. A French gentleman expressed some surprise at the immense influence which Fox, a man of pleasure, ruined by the dice-box and the turf, exercised over the English nation. "You have not," said Pitt, "been under the wand of the magician."

In November 1783 the Parliament met again. The government had irresistible strength in the House of Commons, and seemed to be scarcely less strong in the House of Lords, but was, in truth, surrounded on every side by dangers. The King was impatiently waiting for the moment at which he could emancipate himself from a yoke which galled him so severely that he had more than once seriously thought of retiring to Hanover; and the King was scarcely more eager for a change than the nation. Fox and North had committed a fatal error. They ought to have known that coalitions between parties which have long been hostile can succeed only when the wish for coalition pervades the lower ranks of both. If the leaders unite before there is any disposition to union among the followers, the probability is that there will be a mutiny in both camps, and that the two revolted armies will make a truce with each other, in order to be revenged on those by whom they think that they have been betrayed. Thus it was in 1783. At the beginning of that eventful year, North had been the recognised head of the old Tory party, which, though for a moment prostrated by the disastrous issue of the American war, was still a great power in the state. To him the clergy, the universities, and that large body of country gentlemen whose rallying cry was "Church and King," had long looked up with respect and confidence. Fox had, on the other hand, been the idol of the Whigs, and of the whole body of Protestant dissenters. The coalition at once alienated the most zealous Tories from North, and the most zealous Whigs from Fox. The University of Oxford, which had marked its approbation of North's orthodoxy by electing him chancellor, the city of London, which had been during two and twenty years at war with the Court, were equally disgusted. Squires and rectors, who had inherited the principles of the cavaliers of the preceding century, could not forgive their old leader for combining with disloyal subjects in order to put a force on the sovereign. The members of the Bill of Rights Society and of the Reform Associations were enraged by learning that their favourite orator now called the great champion of tyranny and corruption his noble friend. Two great multitudes were at once left without any head, and both at once turned their eyes on Pitt. One party saw in him the only man who could rescue the King; the other saw in him the only man who could purify the Parliament. He was supported on one side by Archbishop Markham, the preacher of divine right, and by Jenkinson, the captain of the Prætorian band of the King's friends; on the other side by Jebb and Priestley, Sawbridge and Cartwright, Jack Wilkes and Horne

Tooke. On the benches of the House of Commons, however, the ranks of the ministerial majority were unbroken; and that any statesman would venture to brave such a majority was thought impossible. No prince of the Hanoverian line had ever, under any provocation, ventured to appeal from the representative body to the constituent body. The ministers, therefore, notwithstanding the sullen looks and muttered words of displeasure with which their suggestions were received in the closet, notwithstanding the roar of obloquy which was rising louder and louder every day from every corner of the island, thought themselves secure.

Such was their confidence in their strength that, as soon as the Parliament had met, they brought forward a singularly bold and original plan for the government of the British territories in India. What was proposed was that the whole authority, which till that time had been exercised over those territories by the East India Company, should be transferred to seven Commissioners who were to be named by Parliament, and were not to be removable at the pleasure of the Crown. Earl Fitzwilliam, the most intimate personal friend of Fox, was to be chairman of this board; and the eldest son of North was to be one of the members.

As soon as the outlines of the scheme were known, all the hatred which the coalition had excited burst forth with an astounding explosion. The question which ought undoubtedly to have been considered as paramount to every other was, whether the proposed change was likely to be beneficial or injurious to the thirty millions of people who were subject to the Company. But that question cannot be said to have been even seriously discussed. Burke, who, whether right or wrong in the conclusions to which he came, had at least the merit of looking at the subject in the right point of view, vainly reminded his hearers of that mighty population whose daily rice might depend on a vote of the British Parliament. He spoke, with even more than his wonted power of thought and language, about the desolation of Rohilcund, about the spoliation of Benares, about the evil policy which had suffered the tanks of the Carnatic to go to ruin; but he could scarcely obtain a hearing. The contending parties, to their shame it must be said, would listen to none but English topics. Out of doors the cry against the ministry was almost universal. Town and country were united. Corporations exclaimed against the violation of the charter of the greatest corporation in the realm. Tories and democrats joined in pronouncing the proposed board an unconstitutional body. It was to consist of Fox's nominees. The effect of his bill was to give, not to the Crown, but to him personally, whether in office or in opposition, an enormous power, a patronage sufficient to counterbalance the patronage of the Treasury and of the Admiralty, and to decide the elections for fifty boroughs. He knew, it was said, that he was hateful alike to King and people; and he had devised a plan which would make him independent of both. Some nicknamed him Cromwell, and some Carlo Khan. Wilberforce, with his usual felicity of expression, and with very unusual bitterness of feeling, described the scheme as the genuine offspring of the coalition, as marked by the features of both its parents, the corruption of one and the violence of the other. In spite of all opposition, however, the bill was supported in every stage by great majorities, was rapidly passed and was sent up to the Lords. To the general astonishment, when the second reading was moved in the Upper House, the opposition proposed an adjournment, and carried it by eighty-seven votes to seventy-nine. The cause of this strange turn of fortune was soon known. Pitt's cousin, Earl Temple, had been in the royal closet, and had there been authorised to let it be known that His Majesty would consider all who voted for the bill as his enemies. The ignominious commission was performed; and instantly a troop of Lords of the Bedchamber, of Bishops who wished to be translated, and of Scotch peers who wished to be re-elected, made haste to change sides. On a later day, the Lords rejected the bill. Fox and North were immediately directed to send their seals to the palace by their Under Secretaries; and Pitt was appointed First Lord of the Treasury and Chancellor of the Exchequer.

The general opinion was, that there would be an immediate dissolution. But Pitt wisely determined to give the public feeling time to gather strength. On this point he differed from his kinsman Temple. The consequence was, that Temple, who had been appointed one of the Secretaries of State, resigned his office forty-eight hours after he had accepted it, and thus relieved the new government from a great load of unpopularity; for all men of sense and honour, however strong might be their dislike of the India Bill, disapproved of the manner in which that bill had been thrown out. Temple carried away with him the scandal which the best friends of the new government could not but lament. The fame of the young prime minister preserved its whiteness. He could declare with perfect truth that, if unconstitutional machinations had been employed, he had been no party to them.

He was, however, surrounded by difficulties and dangers. In the House of Lords, indeed, he had a majority; nor could any orator of the opposition in that assembly be considered as a match for Thurlow, who was now again Chancellor, or for Camden, who cordially supported the son of his old friend Chatham. But in the other House there was not a single eminent speaker among the official men who sate round Pitt. His most useful assistant was Dundas, who, though he had not eloquence, had sense, knowledge, readiness, and boldness. On the opposite benches was a powerful majority, led by Fox, who was supported by Burke, North, and Sheridan. The heart of the young minister, stout as it was, almost died within him. He could not once close his eyes on the night which followed Temple's resignation. But, whatever his internal emotions might be, his language and deportment indicated nothing but unconquerable firmness and haughty confidence in his own powers. His contest against the House of Commons lasted from the 17th of December 1783, to the 8th of March 1784. In sixteen divisions the opposition triumphed. Again and again the King was requested to dismiss his ministers. But he was determined to go to Germany rather than yield. Pitt's resolution never wavered. The cry of the nation in his favour became vehement and almost furious. Addresses assuring him of public support came up daily from every part of the kingdom. The freedom of the city of London was presented to him in a gold box. He went in state to receive this mark of distinction. He was sumptuously feasted in Grocers' Hall; and the shopkeepers of the Strand and Fleet Street illuminated their houses in his honour. These things could not but produce an effect within the walls of Parliament. The ranks of the majority began to waver; a few passed over to the enemy; some skulked away; many were for capitulating while it was still possible to capitulate with the honours of war. Negotiations were opened with the view of forming an administration on a wide basis; but they had scarcely been opened when they were closed. The opposition demanded, as a preliminary article of the treaty, that Pitt should resign the Treasury; and with this demand

Pitt steadfastly refused to comply. While the contest was raging, the Clerkship of the Pells, a sinecure place for life, worth three thousand a year, and tenable with a seat in the House of Commons, became vacant. The appointment was with the Chancellor of the Exchequer: nobody doubted that he would appoint himself; and nobody could have blamed him if he had done so: for such sinecure offices had always been defended on the ground that they enabled a few men of eminent abilities and small incomes to live without any profession, and to devote themselves to the service of the state. Pitt, in spite of the remonstrances of his friends, gave the Pells to his father's old adherent, Colonel Barré, a man distinguished by talent and eloquence, but poor and afflicted with blindness. By this arrangement a pension which the Rockingham administration had granted to Barré was saved to the public. Never was there a happier stroke of policy. About treaties, wars, expeditions, tariffs, budgets, there will always be room for dispute. The policy which is applauded by half the nation may be condemned by the other half. But pecuniary disinterestedness everybody comprehends. It is a great thing for a man who has only three hundred a year to be able to show that he considers three thousand a year as mere dirt beneath his feet, when compared with the public interest and the public esteem. Pitt had his reward. No minister was ever more rancorously libelled; but, even when he was known to be overwhelmed with debt, when millions were passing through his hands, when the wealthiest magnates of the realm were soliciting him for marquisates and garters, his bitterest enemies did not dare to accuse him of touching unlawful gain.

At length the hard fought fight ended. A final remonstrance, drawn up by Burke with admirable skill, was carried on the 8th of March by a single vote in a full House. Had the experiment been repeated, the supporters of the coalition would probably have been in a minority. But the supplies had been voted; the Mutiny Bill had been passed; and the Parliament was dissolved.

The popular constituent bodies all over the country were in general enthusiastic on the side of the new government. A hundred and sixty of the supporters of the coalition lost their seats. The First Lord of the Treasury himself came in at the head of the poll for the University of Cambridge. His young friend, Wilberforce, was elected knight of the great shire of York, in opposition to the whole influence of the Fitzwilliams, Cavendishes, Dundases, and Saviles. In the midst of such triumphs Pitt completed his twenty-fifth year. He was now the greatest subject that England had seen during many generations. He domineered absolutely over the cabinet, and was the favourite at once of the Sovereign, of the Parliament, and of the nation. His father had never been so powerful, nor Walpole, nor Marlborough.

This narrative has now reached a point, beyond which a full history of the life of Pitt would be a history of England, or rather of the whole civilised world; and for such a history this is not the proper place. Here a very slight sketch must suffice; and in that sketch prominence will be given to such points as may enable a reader who is already acquainted with the general course of events to form a just notion of the character of the man on whom so much depended.

If we wish to arrive at a correct judgment of Pitt's merits and defects, we must never forget that he belonged to a peculiar class of statesmen, and that he must be tried by a peculiar standard. It is not easy to compare him fairly with such men as Ximenes and Sully, Richelieu and

Oxenstiern, John de Witt, and Warren Hastings. The means by which those politicians governed great communities were of quite a different kind from those which Pitt was under the necessity of employing. Some talents, which they never had any opportunity of showing that they possessed, were developed in him to an extraordinary degree. In some qualities, on the other hand, to which they owe a large part of their fame, he was decidedly their inferior. They transacted business in their closets, or at boards where a few confidential councillors sate. It was his lot to be born in an age and in a country in which parliamentary government was completely established his whole training from infancy was such as fitted him to bear a part in parliamentary government ; and, from the prime of his manhood to his death, all the powers of his vigorous mind were almost constantly exerted in the work of parliamentary government. He accordingly became the greatest master of the whole art of parliamentary government that has ever existed, a greater than Montague or Walpole, a greater than his father Chatham, or his rival Fox, a greater than either of his illustrious successors, Canning and Peel.

Parliamentary government, like every other contrivance of man, has its advantages and disadvantages. On the advantages there is no need to dilate. The history of England during the hundred and seventy years which have elapsed since the House of Commons became the most powerful body in the state, her immense and still growing prosperity, her freedom, her tranquillity, her greatness in arts, in sciences, and in arms, her maritime ascendency, the marvels of her public credit, her American, her African, her Australian, her Asiatic empires, sufficiently prove the excellence of her institutions. But those institutions, though excellent, are assuredly not perfect. Parliamentary government is government by speaking. In such a government, the power of speaking is the most highly prized of all the qualities which a politician can possess : and that power may exist, in the highest degree, without judgment, without fortitude, without skill in reading the characters of men or the signs of the times, without any knowledge of the principles of legislation or of political economy, and without any skill in diplomacy or in the administration of war. Nay, it may well happen that those very intellectual qualities which give a peculiar charm to the speeches of a public man may be incompatible with the qualities which would fit him to meet a pressing emergency with promptitude and firmness. It was thus with Charles Townshend. It was thus with Windham. It was a privilege to listen to those accomplished and ingenious orators. But in a perilous crisis they would have been found far inferior in all the qualities of rulers to such a man as Oliver Cromwell, who talked nonsense, or as William the Silent, who did not talk at all. When parliamentary government is established, a Charles Townshend or a Windham will almost always exercise much greater influence than such men as the great Protector of England, or as the founder of the Batavian commonwealth. In such a government, parliamentary talent, though quite distinct from the talents of a good executive or judicial officer, will be a chief qualification for executive and judicial office. From the Book of Dignities a curious list might be made out of Chancellors ignorant of the principles of equity, and First Lords of the Admiralty ignorant of the principles of navigation, of Colonial ministers who could not repeat the names of the Colonies, of Lords of the Treasury who did not know the difference between funded and unfunded debt, and of Secretaries of the India Board who did not know whether the Mahrattas were Mahometans or Hindoos. On these grounds, some persons, incapable of seeing more than one side of a question, have pronounced parliamentary government a positive evil, and have maintained that the administration would be greatly improved if the power, now exercised by a large assembly, were transferred to a single person. Men of sense will probably think the remedy very much worse than the disease, and will be of opinion that there would be small gain in exchanging Charles Townshend and Windham for the Prince of the Peace, or the poor slave and dog Steenie.

Pitt was emphatically the man of parliamentary government, the type of his class, the minion, the child, the spoiled child, of the House of Commons. For the House of Commons he had a hereditary, an infantine love. Through his whole boyhood, the House of Commons was never out of his thoughts, or out of the thoughts of his instructors. Reciting at his father's knee, reading Thucydides and Cicero into English, analysing the great Attic speeches on the Embassy and on the Crown, he was constantly in training for the conflicts of the House of Commons. He was a distinguished member of the House of Commons at twenty-one. The ability which he had displayed in the House of Commons made him the most powerful subject in Europe before he was twenty-five. It would have been happy for himself and for his country if his elevation had been deferred. Eight or ten years, during which he would have had leisure and opportunity for reading and reflection, for foreign travel, for social intercourse and free exchange of thought on equal terms with a great variety of companions, would have supplied what, without any fault on his part, was wanting to his powerful intellect. He had all the knowledge that he could be expected to have; that is to say, all the knowledge that a man can acquire while he is a student at Cambridge, and all the knowledge that a man can acquire when he is First Lord of the Treasury and Chancellor of the Exchequer. But the stock of general information which he brought from college, extraordinary for a boy, was far inferior to what Fox possessed, and beggarly when compared with the massy, the splendid, the various treasures laid up in the large mind of Burke. After Pitt became minister, he had no leisure to learn more than was necessary for the purposes of the day which was passing over him. What was necessary for those purposes such a man could learn with little difficulty. He was surrounded by experienced and able public servants. He could at any moment command their best assistance. From the stores which they produced his vigorous mind rapidly collected the materials for a good parliamentary case; and that was enough. Legislation and administration were with him secondary matters. To the work of framing statutes, of negotiating treaties, of organising fleets and armies, of sending forth expeditions, he gave only the leavings of his time and the dregs of his fine intellect. The strength and sap of his mind were all drawn in a different direction. It was when the House of Commons was to be convinced and persuaded that he put forth all his powers.

Of those powers we must form our estimate chiefly from tradition; for of all the eminent speakers of the last age Pitt has suffered most from the reporters. Even while he was still living, critics remarked that his eloquence could not be preserved, that he must be heard to be appreciated. They more than once applied to him the sentence in which Tacitus describes the fate of a senator whose rhetoric was admired in the Augustan age: "Haterii canorum illud et profluens cum ipso simul exstinctum est." There is, however, abundant evidence that nature had bestowed on Pitt the talents of a great orator; and those talents had been developed in a very peculiar manner, first by his education, and secondly by the high official position to which he rose early, and in which he passed the greater part of his public life.

At his first appearance in Parliament he showed himself superior to all his contemporaries in command of language. He could pour forth a long succession of round and stately periods, without premeditation, without ever pausing for a word, without ever repeating a word, in a voice of silver clearness, and with a pronunciation so articulate that not a letter was slurred over. He had less amplitude of mind and less richness of imagination than Burke, less ingenuity than Windham, less wit than Sheridan, less perfect mastery of dialectical fence, and less of that highest sort of eloquence which consists of reason and passion fused together, than Fox. Yet the almost unanimous judgment of those who were in the habit of listening to that remarkable race of men placed Pitt, as a speaker, above Burke, above Windham, above Sheridan, and not below Fox. His declamation was copious, polished, and splendid. In power of sarcasm he was probably not surpassed by any speaker, ancient or modern ; and of this formidable weapon he made merciless use. In two parts of the oratorical art which are of the highest value to a minister of state he was singularly expert. No man knew better how to be luminous or how to be obscure. When he wished to be understood, he never failed to make himself understood. He could with ease present to his audience, not perhaps an exact or profound, but a clear, popular, and plausible view of the most extensive and complicated subject. Nothing was out of place ; nothing was forgotten ; minute details, dates, sums of money, were all faithfully preserved in his memory. Even intricate questions of finance, when explained by him, seemed clear to the plainest man among his hearers. On the other hand, when he did not wish to be explicit,—and no man who is at the head of affairs always wishes to be explicit,—he had a marvellous power of saying nothing in language which left on his audience the impression that he had said a great deal. He was at once the only man who could open a budget without notes, and the only man who, as Windham said, could speak that most elaborately evasive and unmeaning of human compositions, a King's speech, without premeditation.

The effect of oratory will always to a great extent depend on the character of the orator. There perhaps never were two speakers whose eloquence had more of what may be called the race, more of the flavour imparted by moral qualities, than Fox and Pitt. The speeches of Fox owe a great part of their charm to that warmth and softness of heart, that sympathy with human suffering, that admiration for everything great and beautiful, and that hatred of cruelty and injustice, which interest and delight us even in the most defective reports. No person, on the other hand, could hear Pitt without perceiving him to be a man of high, intrepid, and commanding spirit, proudly conscious of his own rectitude and of his own intellectual superiority, incapable of the low vices of fear and envy, but too prone to feel and to show disdain. Pride, indeed, pervaded the whole man, was written in the harsh, rigid lines of his face, was marked by the way in which he walked, in which he sate, in which he stood, and, above all, in which he bowed. Such pride, of course, inflicted many wounds. It may confidently be affirmed that there cannot be found, in all the ten thousand invectives written against Fox, a word indicating that his demeanour had ever made a single personal enemy. On the other hand, several men of note who had been partial to Pitt, and who to the last continued to approve his public conduct and to support his administration, Cumberland, for example, Boswell, and Matthias, were so much irritated by the contempt with which he treated them, that they complained in print of their wrongs. But his pride, though it made him bitterly disliked by individuals, inspired the great body of his followers in Parliament and throughout the country with respect and confidence. They took him at his own valuation. They saw that his self-esteem was not that of an upstart, who was drunk with good luck and with applause, and who, if fortune turned, would sink from arrogance into abject humility. It was that of the magnanimous man so finely described by Aristotle in the Ethics, of the man who thinks himself worthy of great things, being in truth worthy. It sprang from a consciousness of great powers and great virtues, and was never so conspicuously displayed as in the midst of difficulties and dangers which would have unnerved and bowed down any ordinary mind. It was closely connected, too, with an ambition which had no mixture of low cupidity. There was something noble in the cynical disdain with which the mighty minister scattered riches and titles to right and left among those who valued them, while he spurned them out of his own way. Poor himself, he was surrounded by friends on whom he had bestowed three thousand, six thousand, ten thousand a year. Plain Mister himself, he had made more lords than any three ministers that had preceded him. The garter, for which the first dukes in the kingdom were contending, was repeatedly offered to him, and offered in vain.

The correctness of his private life added much to the dignity of his public character. In the relations of son, brother, uncle, master, friend, his conduct was exemplary. In the small circle of his intimate associates, he was amiable, affectionate, even playful. They loved him sincerely; they regretted him long; and they would hardly admit that he who was so kind and gentle with them could be stern and haughty with others. He indulged, indeed, somewhat too freely in wine, which he had early been directed to take as a medicine, and which use had made a necessary of life to him. But it was very seldom that any indication of undue excess could be detected in his tones or gestures; and, in truth, two bottles of port were little more to him than two dishes of tea. He had, when he was first introduced into the clubs of Saint James's Street, shown a strong taste for play; but he had the prudence and the resolution to stop before this taste had acquired the strength of habit. From the passion which generally exercises the most tyrannical dominion over the young he possessed an immunity, which is probably to be ascribed partly to his temperament and partly to his situation. His constitution was feeble; he was very shy; and he was very busy. The strictness of his morals furnished such buffoons as Peter Pindar and Captain Morris with an inexhaustible theme for merriment of no very delicate kind. But the great body of the middle class of Englishmen could not see the joke. They warmly praised the young statesman for commanding his passions, and for covering his frailties, if he had frailties, with decorous obscurity, and would have been very far indeed from thinking better of him if he had vindicated himself from the taunts of his enemies by taking under his protection a Nancy Parsons or a Marianne Clark.

No part of the immense popularity which Pitt long enjoyed is to be attributed to the eulogies of wits and poets. It might have been naturally expected that a man of genius, of learning, of taste, an orator whose diction was often compared to that of Tully, the representative, too, of a great university, would have taken a peculiar pleasure in befriending eminent writers, to whatever political party they might have belonged. The love of literature had induced Augustus to heap benefits on Pompeians, Somers to be the protector of nonjurors, Harley to make the fortunes of Whigs. But it could not move Pitt to show any favour even to Pittites. He was doubtless right in thinking that, in general, poetry, history, and philosophy ought to be suffered, like calico and cutlery, to find their proper price in the market, and that to teach men of letters to look habitually to the state for their recompense is bad for the state and bad for letters. Assuredly nothing can be more absurd or mischievous than to waste the public money in bounties for the purpose of inducing people who ought to be weighing out grocery or measuring out drapery to write bad or middling books. But, though the sound rule is that authors should be left to be remunerated by their readers, there will, in every generation, be a few exceptions to this rule. To distinguish these special cases from the mass is an employment well worthy of the faculties of a great and accomplished ruler; and Pitt would assuredly have had little difficulty in finding such cases. While he was in power, the greatest philologist of the age, his own contemporary at Cambridge, was reduced to earn a livelihood by the lowest literary drudgery, and to spend in writing squibs for the *Morning Chronicle* years to which we might have owned an all but perfect text of the whole tragic and comic drama of Athens. The greatest historian of the age, forced by poverty to leave his country, completed his immortal work on the shores of Lake Leman. The political heterodoxy of Porson, and the religious heterodoxy of Gibbon, may perhaps be pleaded in defence of the minister by whom those eminent men were neglected. But there were other cases in which no such excuse could be set up. Scarcely had Pitt obtained possession of unbounded power when an aged writer of the highest eminence, who had made very little by his writings, and who was sinking into the grave under a load of infirmities and sorrows, wanted five or six hundred pounds to enable him, during the winter or two which might still remain to him, to draw his breath more easily in the soft climate of Italy. Not a farthing was to be obtained; and before Christmas the author of the English Dictionary and of the Lives of the Poets had gasped his last in the river fog and coal smoke of Fleet Street. A few months after the death of Johnson appeared the Task, incomparably the best poem that any Englishman then living had produced—a poem, too, which could hardly fail to excite in a well constituted mind a feeling of esteem and compassion for the poet, a man of genius and virtue, whose means were scanty, and whom the most cruel of all the calamities incident to humanity had made incapable of supporting himself by vigorous and sustained exertion. Nowhere had Chatham been praised with more enthusiasm, or in verse more worthy of the subject, than in the Task. The son of Chatham, however, contented himself with reading and admiring the book, and left the author to starve. The pension which, long after, enabled poor Cowper to close his melancholy life, unmolested by duns and bailiffs, was obtained for him by the strenuous kindness of Lord Spencer. What a contrast between the way in which Pitt acted towards Johnson and the way in which Lord Grey acted towards his political enemy Scott, when Scott, worn out by misfortune and disease, was advised to try the effect of the Italian air! What a contrast between the way in which Pitt acted towards Cowper and the way in which Burke, a poor man and out of place, acted towards Crabbe! Even Dundas, who made no pretensions to literary taste, and was content to be considered as a hardheaded and somewhat coarse man of business, was, when compared with his eloquent and classically educated friend, a Mæcenas or a Leo. Dundas made Burns an exciseman, with seventy pounds a year; and this was more than Pitt, during his long tenure of power, did for the encouragement of letters. Even those who may think that it is, in general, no part of the duty of a government to reward literary merit will hardly deny that a government, which has much lucrative church preferment in its gift, is bound, in distributing that preferment, not to overlook divines whose writings have rendered great service to the cause of religion. But it seems never to have occurred to Pitt that he lay under any such obligation. All the theological works of all the numerous bishops whom he made and translated are not, when put together, worth fifty pages of the Horæ Paulinæ, of the Natural Theology, or of the View of the Evidences of Christianity. But on Paley the all-powerful minister never bestowed the small benefice. Artists Pitt treated as contemptuously as writers. For painting he did simply nothing. Sculptors, who had been selected to execute monuments voted by Parliament, had to haunt the ante-chambers of the Treasury during many years before they could obtain a farthing from him. One of them, after vainly soliciting the minister for payment during fourteen years, had the courage to present a memorial to the King, and thus obtained tardy and ungracious justice. Architects it was absolutely necessary to employ; and the worst that could be found seem to have been employed. Not a single fine public building of any kind or in any style was erected during his long administration. It may be confidently affirmed that no ruler whose abilities and attainments would bear any comparison with his has ever shown such cold disdain for what is excellent in arts and letters.

His first administration lasted seventeen years. That long period is divided by a strongly marked line into two almost exactly equal parts. The first part ended and the second began in the autumn of 1792. Throughout both parts Pitt displayed in the highest degree the talents of a parliamentary leader. During the first part he was a fortunate and, in many respects, a skilful administrator. With the difficulties which he had to encounter during the second part he was altogether incapable of contending: but his eloquence and his perfect mastery of the tactics of the House of Commons concealed his incapacity from the multitude.

The eight years which followed the general election of 1784 were as tranquil and prosperous as any eight years in the whole history of England. Neighbouring nations which had lately been in arms against her, and which had flattered themselves that, in losing her American colonies, she had lost a chief source of her wealth and of her power, saw, with wonder and vexation, that she was more wealthy and more powerful than ever. Her trade increased. Her manufactures flourished. Her exchequer was full to overflowing. Very idle apprehensions were generally entertained, that the public debt, though much less than a third of the debt which we now bear with ease, would be found too heavy for the strength of the nation. Those apprehensions might not perhaps have been easily quieted by reason. But Pitt quieted them by a juggle. He succeeded in persuading first himself, and then the whole nation, his opponents included, that a new sinking fund, which, so far as it differed from former sinking funds, differed for the worse, would, by virtue of some mysterious power of propagation belonging to money, put into the pocket of the public creditor great sums not taken out of the pocket of the tax-payer. The country, terrified by a danger which was no danger, hailed with delight and boundless confidence a remedy which was no remedy. The minister was almost universally extolled as the greatest of financiers. Meanwhile both the branches of the House of Bourbon found that England was as formidable an antagonist as she had ever been. France had formed a plan for reducing Holland to vassalage. But England interposed; and France receded. Spain interrupted by violence the trade of our merchants with the regions near the Oregon. But England armed; and Spain receded. Within the island there was profound tranquillity. The King was, for the first time, popular. During the twenty-three years which had followed his accession he had not been loved by his subjects. His domestic virtues were acknowledged. But it was generally thought that the good qualities by which he was distinguished in private life were wanting to his political character. As a Sovereign, he was resentful, unforgiving, stubborn, cunning. Under his rule the country had sustained cruel disgraces and disasters; and every one of those disgraces and disasters was imputed to his strong antipathies, and to his perverse obstinacy in the wrong. One statesman after another complained that he had been induced by royal caresses, intreaties, and promises, to undertake the direction of affairs at a difficult conjuncture, and that, as soon as he had, not without sullying his fame, and alienating his best friends, served the turn for which he was wanted, his ungrateful master began to intrigue against him, and to canvass against him. Grenville, Rockingham, Chatham, men of widely different characters, but all three upright and high-spirited, agreed in thinking that the Prince under whom they had successively held the highest place in the government was one of the most insincere of mankind. His confidence was reposed, they said, not in those known and responsible counsellors to whom he had delivered the seals of office, but in secret advisers who stole up the back stairs into his closet. In Parliament his ministers, while defending themselves against the attacks of the opposition in front, were perpetually, at his instigation, assailed on the flank or in the rear by a vile band of mercenaries who called themselves his friends. These men constantly, while in possession of lucrative places in his service, spoke and voted against bills which he had authorised the First Lord of the Treasury or the Secretary of State to bring in. But from the day on which Pitt was placed at the head of affairs there was an end of secret influence. His haughty and aspiring spirit was not to be satisfied with the mere show of power. Any attempt to undermine him at Court, any mutinous movement among his followers in the House of Commons, was certain to be at once put down. He had only to tender his resignation; and he could dictate his own terms. For he, and he alone, stood between the King and the Coalition. He was therefore little less than Mayor of the Palace. The nation loudly applauded the King for having the wisdom to repose entire confidence in so excellent a minister. His Majesty's private virtues now began to produce their full effect. He was generally regarded as the model of a respectable country gentleman, honest, good-natured, sober, religious. He rose early: he dined temperately: he was strictly faithful to his wife: he never missed church; and at church he never missed a response. His people heartily prayed that he might long reign over them; and they prayed the more heartily because his virtues were set off to the best advantage by the vices and follies of the Prince of Wales, who lived in close intimacy with the chiefs of the opposition.

How strong this feeling was in the public mind appeared signally on one great occasion. In the autumn of 1788 the King became insane, The opposition, eager for office, committed the great indiscretion of asserting that the heir apparent had, by the fundamental laws of England, a right to be Regent with the full powers of royalty. Pitt, on the other hand, maintained it to be the constitutional doctrine that, when a Sovereign is, by reason of infancy, disease, or absence, incapable of exercising the regal functions, it belongs to the Estates of the realm to determine who shall be the vicegerent and with what portion of the executive authority such vicegerent shall be entrusted. A long and violent contest followed, in which Pitt was supported by the great body of the people with as much enthusiasm as during the first months of his administration. Tories with one voice applauded him for defending the sick-bed of a virtuous and unhappy Sovereign against a disloyal faction and an undutiful son. Not a few Whigs applauded him for asserting the authority of Parliaments and the principles of the Revolution, in opposition to a doctrine which seemed to have too much affinity with the servile theory of indefeasible hereditary right. The middle class, always zealous on the side of decency and the domestic virtues, looked forward with dismay to a reign resembling that of Charles II. The palace, which had now been, during thirty years, the pattern of an English home, would be a public nuisance, a school of profligacy. To the good King's repast of mutton and lemonade, despatched at three o'clock, would succeed midnight banquets, from which the guests would be carried home speechless. To the backgammon board at which the good King played for a little silver with his equerries, would succeed faro tables from which young patricians who had sate down rich would rise up beggars. The drawing-room, from which the frown of the Queen had repelled a whole generation of frail beauties, would now be again what it had been in the days of Barbara Palmer and Louisa de Querouaille. Nay, severely as the public reprobated the Prince's many illicit attachments, his one virtuous attachment was reprobated more severely still. Even in grave and pious circles his Protestant mistresses gave less scandal than his Popish wife. That he must be Regent nobody ventured to deny. But he and his friends were so unpopular that Pitt could, with general approbation, propose to limit the powers of the Regent by restrictions to which it would have been impossible to subject a Prince beloved and trusted by the country. Some interested men, fully expecting a change of administration, went over to the opposition. But the majority, purified by these desertions, closed its ranks, and presented a more firm array than ever to the enemy. In every division Pitt was victorious. When at length, after a stormy interregnum of three months, it was announced, on the very eve of the inauguration of the Regent, that the King was himself again, the nation was wild with delight. On the evening of the day on which His Majesty resumed his functions, a spontaneous illumination, the most general that had ever been seen in England, brightened the whole vast space from Highgate to Tooting, and from Hammersmith to Greenwich. On the day on which he returned thanks in the cathedral of his capital, all the horses and carriages within a hundred miles of London were too few for the multitudes which flocked to see him pass through the streets. A second illumination followed, which was even superior to the first in magnificence. Pitt with difficulty escaped from the tumultuous kindness of an innumerable multitude which insisted on drawing his coach from Saint Paul's Churchyard to Downing Street. This was the moment at which his fame and fortune may be said to have reached the zenith. His influence in the closet was as great as that of Carr or Villiers had been. His dominion over the Parliament was more absolute than that of Walpole of Pelham had been. He was at the same time as high in the favour of the populace as ever Wilkes or Sacheverell had been. Nothing did more to raise his character than his noble poverty. It was well known that, if he had been dismissed from office after more than five years of boundless power, he would hardly have carried out with him a sum sufficient to furnish the set of chambers in which, as he cheerfully declared, he meant to resume the practice of the law. His admirers, however, were by no means disposed to suffer him to depend on daily toil for his daily bread. The voluntary contributions which were awaiting his acceptance in the city of London alone would have sufficed to make him a rich man. But it may be doubted whether his haughty spirit would have stooped to accept a provision so honourably earned and so honourably bestowed.

To such a height of power and glory had this extraordinary man risen at twenty-nine years of age. And now the tide was on the turn. Only ten days after the triumphal procession to Saint Paul's, the States-General of France, after an interval of a hundred and seventy-four years, met at Versailles.

The nature of the great Revolution which followed was long very imperfectly understood in this country. Burke saw much further than any of his contemporaries: but whatever his sagacity descried was refracted and discoloured by his passions and his imagination. More than three years elapsed before the principles of the English administration underwent any material change. Nothing could as yet be milder or more strictly constitutional than the minister's domestic policy. Not a single act indicating an arbitrary temper or a jealousy of the people could be imputed to him. He had never applied to Parliament for any extraordinary powers. He had never used with harshness the ordinary powers entrusted by the constitution to the executive government. Not a single state prosecution which would even now be called oppressive had been instituted by him. Indeed, the only oppressive state prosecution instituted during the first eight years of his administration was that of Stockdale, which is to be attributed not to the government, but to the chiefs of the opposition. In office Pitt had redeemed the pledges which he had, at his entrance into public life, given to the supporters of parliamentary reform. He had, in 1785, brought forward a judicious plan for the improvement of the representative system, and had prevailed on the King, not only to refrain from talking against that plan, but to recommend it to the Houses in a speech from the throne.* This attempt failed; but there can be little doubt that, if the French Revolution had not produced a violent reaction of public feeling, Pitt would have performed, with little difficulty and no danger, that great work which, at a later period, Lord Grey could accomplish only by means which for a time loosened the very foundations of the commonwealth. When the atrocities of the slave trade were first brought under the consideration of Parliament, no abolitionist was more zealous than Pitt. When sickness prevented Wilberforce from appearing in public, his place was most efficiently supplied by his friend the minister. A humane bill, which mitigated the horrors of the middle passage, was, in 1788, carried by the eloquence and determined spirit of Pitt, in spite of the opposition of some of his own colleagues ; and it ought always to be remembered to his honour that, in order to carry that bill, he kept the Houses sitting, in spite of many murmurs, long after the business of the government had been done, and the Appropriation Act passed. In 1791 he cordially concurred with Fox in maintaining the sound constitutional doctrine, that an impeachment is not terminated by a dissolution. In the course of the same year the two great rivals contended side by side in a far more important cause. They are fairly entitled to divide the high honour of having added to our statute-book the inestimable law which places the liberty of the press under the protection of juries. On one occasion, and one alone, Pitt, during the first half of his long administration, acted in a manner unworthy of an enlightened Whig. In the debate on the Test Act, he stooped to gratify the master whom he served, the university which he represented, and the great body of clergymen and country gentlemen on whose support he rested, by talking, with little heartiness, indeed, and with no asperity, the language of a Tory. With this single exception, his conduct from the end of 1783 to the middle of 1792 was that of an honest friend of civil and religious liberty.

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* The speech with which the King opened the session of 1785, concluded with an assurance that His Majesty would heartily concur in every measure which could tend to secure the true principles of the constitution. These words were at the time understood to refer to Pitt's Reform Bill.

Nor did anything, during that period, indicate that he loved war, or harboured any malevolent feeling against any neighbouring nation. Those French writers who have represented him as a Hannibal sworn in childhood by his father to bear eternal hatred to France, as having by mysterious intrigues and lavish bribes, instigated the leading Jacobins to commit those excesses which dishonoured the Revolution, as having been the real author of the first coalition, know nothing of his character or of his history. So far was he from being a deadly enemy to France, that his laudable attempts to bring about a closer connection with that country by means of a wise and liberal treaty of commerce brought on him the severe censure of the opposition. He was told in the House of Commons that he was a degenerate son, and that his partiality for the hereditary foes of our island was enough to make his great father's bones stir under the pavement of the Abbey.

And this man, whose name, if he had been so fortunate as to die in 1792, would now have been associated with peace, with freedom, with philanthropy, with temperate reform, with mild and constitutional administration, lived to associate his name with arbitrary government, with harsh laws harshly executed, with alien bills, with gagging bills, with suspensions of the Habeas Corpus Act, with cruel punishments inflicted on some political agitators, with unjustifiable prosecutions instituted against others, and with the most costly and most sanguinary wars of modern times. He lived to be held up to obloquy as the stern oppressor of England, and the indefatigable disturber of Europe. Poets, contrasting his earlier with his later years, likened him sometimes to the apostle who kissed in order to betray, and sometimes to the evil angels who kept not their first estate. A satirist of great genius introduced the fiends of Famine, Slaughter, and Fire, proclaiming that they had received their commission from One whose name was formed of four letters, and promising to give their employer ample proofs of gratitude. Famine would gnaw the multitude till they should rise up against him in madness. The demon of slaughter would impel them to tear him from limb to limb. But Fire boasted that she alone could reward him as he deserved, and that she would cling round him to all eternity. By the French press and the French tribune every crime that disgraced and every calamity that afflicted France was ascribed to the monster Pitt and his guineas. While the Jacobins were dominant, it was he who had corrupted the Gironde, who had raised Lyons and Bordeaux against the Convention, who had suborned Paris to assassinate Lepelletier, and Cecilia Regnault to assassinate Robespierre. When the Thermidorian reaction came, all the atrocities of the Reign of Terror were imputed to him. Collet D'Herbois and Fouquier Tinville had been his pensioners. It was he who had hired the murderers of September, who had dictated the pamphlets of Marat and the Carmagnoles of Barère, who had paid Lebon to deluge Arras with blood, and Carrier to choke the Loire with corpses.

The truth is, that he liked neither war nor arbitrary government. He was a lover of peace and freedom, driven, by a stress against which it was hardly possible for any will or any intellect to struggle, out of the course to which his inclinations pointed, and for which his abilities and acquirements fitted him, and forced into a policy repugnant to his feelings and unsuited to his talents.

The charge of apostasy is grossly unjust. A man ought no more to be called an apostate because his opinions alter with the opinions of the great body of his contemporaries than he ought to be called an oriental traveller because he is always going round from west to east with the globe and everything that is upon it. Between the spring of 1789 and the close of 1792, the public mind of England underwent a great change. If the change of Pitt's sentiments attracted peculiar notice, it was not because he changed more than his neighbours; for in fact he changed less than most of them; but because his position was far more conspicuous than theirs, because he was, till Bonaparte appeared, the individual who filled the greatest space in the eyes of the inhabitants of the civilised world. During a short time the nation, and Pitt, as one of the nation, looked with interest and approbation on the French Revolution. But soon vast confiscations, the violent sweeping away of ancient institutions, the domination of clubs, the barbarities of mobs maddened by famine and hatred, produced a reaction here. The court, the nobility, the gentry, the clergy, the manufacturers, the merchants, in short, nineteen-twentieths of those who had good roofs over their heads and good coats on their backs, became eager and intolerant Antijacobins. This feeling was at least as strong among the minister's adversaries as among his supporters. Fox in vain attempted to restrain his followers. All his genius, all his vast personal influence, could not prevent them from rising up against him in general mutiny. Burke set the example of revolt; and Burke was in no long time joined by Portland, Spencer, Fitzwilliam, Loughborough, Carlisle, Malmesbury, Windham, Elliot. In the House of Commons, the followers of the great Whig statesman and orator diminished from about a hundred and sixty to fifty. In the House of Lords he had but ten or twelve adherents left. There can be no doubt that there would have been a similar mutiny on the ministerial benches if Pitt had obstinately resisted the general wish. Pressed at once by his master and by his colleagues, by old friends and by old opponents, he abandoned, slowly and reluctantly, the policy which was dear to his heart. He laboured hard to avert the European war. When the European war broke out, he still flattered himself that it would not be necessary for this country to take either side. In the spring of 1792 he congratulated the Parliament on the prospect of long and profound peace, and proved his sincerity by proposing large remissions of taxation. Down to the end of that year he continued to cherish the hope that England might be able to preserve neutrality. But the passions which raged on both sides of the Channel were not to be restrained. The republicans who ruled France were inflamed by a fanaticism resembling that of the Mussulmans who, with the Koran in one hand and the sword in the other, went forth, conquering and converting, eastward to the Bay of Bengal, and westward to the Pillars of Hercules. The higher and middle classes of England were animated by zeal not less fiery than that of the Crusaders who raised the cry of *Deus vult* at Clermont. The impulse which drove the two nations to a collision was not to be arrested by the abilities or by the authority of any single man. As Pitt was in front of his fellows, and towered high above them, he seemed to lead them. But in fact he was violently pushed on by them, and, had he held back but a little more than he did, would have been thrust out of their way or trampled under their feet.

He yielded to the current: and from that day his misfortunes began. The truth is that there were only two consistent courses before him. Since he did not choose to oppose himself, side by side with Fox, to the public feeling, he should have taken the advice of Burke, and should have availed himself of that feeling to the full extent. If it was impossible to preserve peace, he should have adopted the only policy which could lead to victory. He should have proclaimed a Holy War for religion, morality, property, order, public law, and should have thus opposed to the Jacobins an energy equal to their own. Unhappily he tried to find a middle path; and he found one which united all that was worst in both extremes. He went to war: but he would not understand the peculiar character of that war. He was obstinately blind to the plain fact, that he was contending against a state which was also a sect, and that the new quarrel between England and France was of quite a different kind from the old quarrels about colonies in America and fortresses in the Netherlands. He had to combat frantic enthusiasm, boundless ambition, restless activity, the wildest and most audacious spirit of innovation; and he acted as if he had to deal with the harlots and fops of the old Court of Versailles, with Madame de Pompadour and the Abbé de Bernis. It was pitiable to hear him, year after year, proving to an admiring audience that the wicked Republic was exhausted, that she could not hold out, that her credit was gone, and her assignats were not worth more than the paper of which they were made; as if credit was necessary to a government of which the principle was rapine, as if Alboin could not turn Italy into a desert till he had negotiated a loan at five per cent., as if the exchequer bills of Attila had been at par. It was impossible that a man who so completely mistook the nature of a contest could carry on that contest successfully. Great as Pitt's abilities were, his military administration was that of a driveller. He was at the head of a nation engaged in a struggle for life and death, of a nation eminently distinguished by all the physical and all the moral qualities which make excellent soldiers. The resources at his command were unlimited. The Parliament was even more ready to grant him men and money than he was to ask for them. In such an emergency, and with such means, such a statesman as Richelieu, as Louvois, as Chatham, as Wellesley, would have created in a few months one of the finest armies in the world, and would soon have discovered and brought forward generals worthy to command such an army. Germany might have been saved by another Blenheim; Flanders recovered by another Ramilies; another Poitiers might have delivered the Royalist and Catholic provinces of France from a yoke which they abhorred, and might have spread terror even to the barriers of Paris. But the fact is, that, after eight years of war, after a vast destruction of life, after an expenditure of wealth far exceeding the expenditure of the American war, of the Seven Years' War, of the war of the Austrian Succession, and of the war of the Spanish Succession, united, the English army, under Pitt, was the laughing-stock of all Europe. It could not boast of one single brilliant exploit. It had never shown itself on the Continent but to be beaten, chased, forced to re-embark, or forced to capitulate. To take some sugar island in the West Indies, to scatter some mob of half-naked Irish peasants, such were the most splendid victories won by the British troops under Pitt's auspices.

The English navy no mismanagement could ruin. But during a long period whatever mismanagement could do was done. The Earl of Chatham, without a single qualification for high public trust, was made, by fraternal partiality, First Lord of the Admiralty, and was kept in that great post during two years of a war in which the very existence of the state depended on the efficiency of the fleet. He continued to doze away and trifle away the time which ought to have been devoted to the public service, till the whole mercantile body, though generally disposed to support the government, complained bitterly that our flag gave no protection to our trade. Fortunately he was succeeded by George Earl Spencer, one of those chiefs of the Whig party who, in the great schism caused by the French Revolution, had followed Burke. Lord Spencer, though inferior to many of his colleagues as an orator, was decidedly the best administrator among them. To him it was owing that a long and gloomy succession of days of fasting, and, most emphatically, of humiliation, was interrupted, twice in the short space of eleven months, by days of thanksgiving for great victories.

It may seem paradoxical to say that the incapacity which Pitt showed in all that related to the conduct of the war is, in some sense, the most decisive proof that he was a man of very extraordinary abilities. Yet this is the simple truth. For assuredly one-tenth part of his errors and disasters would have been fatal to the power and influence of any minister who had not possessed, in the highest degree, the talents of a parliamentary leader. While his schemes were confounded, while his predictions were falsified, while the coalitions which he had laboured to form were falling to pieces, while the expeditions which he had sent forth at enormous cost were ending in rout and disgrace, while the enemy against whom he was feebly contending was subjugating Flanders and Brabant, the Electorate of Mentz, and the Electorate of Treves, Holland, Piedmont, Liguria, Lombardy, his authority over the House of Commons was constantly becoming more and more absolute. There was his empire. There were his victories, his Lodi and his Arcola, his Rivoli and his Marengo. If some great misfortune, a pitched battle lost by the allies, the annexation of a new department to the French Republic, a sanguinary insurrection in Ireland, a mutiny in the fleet, a panic in the city, a run on the bank, had spread dismay through the ranks of his majority, that dismay lasted only till he rose from the Treasury bench, drew up his haughty head, stretched his arm with commanding gesture, and poured forth, in deep and sonorous tones, the lofty language of inextinguishable hope and inflexible resolution. Thus, through a long and calamitous period, every disaster that happened without the walls of Parliament was regularly followed by a triumph within them. At length he had no longer an opposition to encounter. Of the great party which had contended against him during the first eight years of his administration more than one half now marched under his standard, with his old competitor the Duke of Portland at their head; and the rest had, after many vain struggles, quitted the field in despair. Fox had retired to the shades of St Anne's Hill, and had there found, in the society of friends whom no vicissitude could estrange from him, of a woman whom he tenderly loved, and of the illustrious dead of Athens, of Rome, and of Florence, ample compensation for all the misfortunes of his public life. Session followed session with scarcely a single division. In the eventful year 1799, the largest minority that could be mustered against the government was twenty-five.

In Pitt's domestic policy there was at this time assuredly no want of vigour. While he offered to French Jacobinism a resistance so feeble that it only encouraged the evil which he wished to suppress, he put down English Jacobinism with a strong hand. The Habeas Corpus Act was repeatedly suspended. Public meetings were placed under severe restraints. The government obtained from parliament power to send out of the country aliens who were suspected of evil designs; and that power was not suffered to be idle. Writers who propounded doctrines adverse to monarchy and aristocracy were proscribed and punished without mercy. It was hardly safe for a republican to avow his political creed over his beefsteak and his bottle of port at a chophouse. The old laws of Scotland against sedition, laws which were considered by Englishmen as barbarous, and which a succession of governments had suffered to rust, were now furbished up and sharpened anew. Men of cultivated minds and polished manners were, for offences which at Westminster would have been treated as mere misdemeanours, sent to herd with felons at Botany Bay. Some reformers, whose opinions were extravagant, and whose language was intemperate, but who had never dreamed of subverting the government by physical force, were indicted for high treason, and were saved from the gallows only by the righteous verdicts of juries. This severity was at the time loudly applauded by alarmists whom fear had made cruel, but will be seen in a very different light by posterity. The truth is, that the Englishmen who wished for a revolution were, even in number, not formidable, and in everything but number, a faction utterly contemptible, without arms, or funds, or plans, or organisation, or leader. There can be no doubt that Pitt, strong as he was in the support of the great body of the nation, might easily have repressed the turbulence of the discontented minority by firmly yet temperately enforcing the ordinary law. Whatever vigour he showed during this unfortunate part of his life was vigour out of place and season. He was all feebleness and langour in his conflict with the foreign enemy who was really to be dreaded, and reserved all his energy and resolution for the domestic enemy who might safely have been despised.

One part only of Pitt's conduct during the last eight years of the eighteenth century deserves high praise. He was the first English minister who formed great designs for the benefit of Ireland. The manner in which the Roman Catholic population of that unfortunate country had been kept down during many generations seemed to him unjust and cruel; and it was scarcely possible for a man of his abilities not to perceive that, in a contest against the Jacobins, the Roman Catholics were his natural allies. Had he been able to do all that he wished, it is probable that a wise and liberal policy would have averted the rebellion of 1798. But the difficulties which he encountered were great, perhaps insurmountable; and the Roman Catholics were, rather by his misfortune than by his fault, thrown into the hands of the Jacobins. There was a third great rising of the Irishry against the Englishry, a rising not less formidable than the risings of 1641 and 1689. The Englishry remained victorious, and it was necessary for Pitt, as it had been necessary for Oliver Cromwell and William of Orange before him, to consider how the victory should be used. It is only just to his memory to say that he formed a scheme of policy, so grand and so simple, so righteous and so humane, that it would alone entitle him to a high place among statesmen. He determined to make Ireland one kingdom with England, and, at the same time, to relieve the Roman Catholic laity from civil disabilities, and to grant a public maintenance to the Roman Catholic clergy. Had he been able to carry these noble designs into effect, the Union would have been an Union indeed. It would have been inseparably associated in the minds of the great majority of Irishmen with civil and religious freedom; and the old Parliament in College Green would have been regretted only by a small knot of discarded jobbers and oppressors, and would have been remembered by the body of the nation with the loathing and contempt due to the most tyrannical and the most corrupt assembly that had ever sate in Europe. But Pitt could execute only one half of what he had projected. He succeeded in obtaining the consent of the Parliaments of both kingdoms to the Union; but that reconciliation of races and sects, without which the Union could exist only in name, was not accomplished. He was well aware that he was likely to find difficulties in the closet. But he flattered himself, that by cautious and dexterous management, those difficulties might be overcome. Unhappily, there were traitors and sycophants in high place who did not suffer him to take his own time, and his own way, but prematurely disclosed his scheme to the King, and disclosed it in the manner most likely to irritate and alarm a weak and diseased mind. His Majesty absurdly imagined that his Coronation oath bound him to refuse his assent to any bill for relieving Roman Catholics from civil disabilities. To argue with him was impossible. Dundas tried to explain the matter, but was told to keep his Scotch metaphysics to himself. Pitt, and Pitt's ablest colleagues, resigned their offices. It was necessary that the King should make a new arrangement. But by this time his anger and distress had brought back the malady which had, many years before, incapacitated him for the discharge of his functions. He actually assembled his family, read the Coronation oath to them, and told them that, if he broke it, the Crown would immediately pass to the House of Savoy. It was not until after an interregnum of several weeks that he regained the full use of his small faculties, and that a ministry after his own heart was at length formed.

The materials out of which he had to construct a government were neither solid nor splendid. To that party, weak in numbers, but strong in every kind of talent, which was hostile to the domestic and foreign policy of his late advisers, he could not have recourse. For that party, while it differed from his late advisers on every point on which they had been honoured with his approbation, cordially agreed with them as to the single matter which had brought on them his displeasure. All that was left to him was to call up the rear ranks of the old ministry to form the front rank of a new ministry. In an age pre-eminently fruitful of parliamentary talents, a cabinet was formed containing hardly a single man who, in parliamentary talents, could be considered as even of the second rate. The most important offices in the state were bestowed on decorous and laborious mediocrity. Henry Addington was at the head of the

Treasury. He had been an early, indeed a hereditary, friend of Pitt, and had by Pitt's influence been placed, while still a young man, in the chair of the House of Commons. He was universally admitted to have been the best speaker that had sate in that chair since the retirement of Onslow. But nature had not bestowed on him very vigorous faculties; and the highly respectable situation which he had long occupied with honour had rather unfitted than fitted him for the discharge of his new duties. His business had been to bear himself evenly between contending factions. He had taken no part in the war of words; and he had always been addressed with marked deference by the great orators who thundered against each other from his right and from his left. It was not strange that, when, for the first time, he had to encounter keen and vigorous antagonists, who dealt hard blows without the smallest ceremony, he should have been awkward and unready, or that the air of dignity and authority which he had acquired in his former post, and of which he had not divested himself, should have made his helplessness laughable and pitiable. Nevertheless, during many months, his power seemed to stand firm. He was a favourite with the King, whom he resembled in narrowness of mind, and to whom he was more obsequious than Pitt had ever been. The nation was put into high good humour by a peace with France. The enthusiasm with which the upper and middle classes had rushed into the war had spent itself. Jacobinism was no longer formidable. Everywhere there was a strong reaction against what was called the atheistical and anarchical philosophy of the eighteenth century. Bonaparte, now First Consul, was busied in constructing out of the ruins of old institutions a new ecclesiastical establishment and a new order of knighthood. That nothing less than the dominion of the whole civilised world would satisfy his selfish ambition was not yet suspected; nor did even wise men see any reason to doubt that he might be as safe a neighbour as any prince of the House of Bourbon had been. The treaty of Amiens was therefore hailed by the great body of the English people with extravagant joy. The popularity of the minister was for the moment immense. His want of parliamentary ability was, as yet, of little consequence: for he had scarcely any adversary to encounter. The old opposition, delighted by the peace, regarded him with favour. A new opposition had indeed been formed by some of the late ministers, and was led by Grenville in the House of Lords, and by Windham in the House of Commons. But the new opposition could scarcely muster ten votes, and was regarded with no favour by the country. On Pitt the ministers relied as on their firmest support. He had not, like some of his colleagues, retired in anger. He had expressed the greatest respect for the conscientious scruple which had taken possession of the royal mind; and he had promised his successors all the help in his power. In private his advice was at their service. In Parliament he took his seat on the bench behind them; and, in more than one debate, defended them with powers far superior to their own. The King perfectly understood the value of such assistance. On one occasion, at the palace, he took the old minister and the new minister aside. "If we three," he said, "keep together, all will go well."

But it was hardly possible, human nature being what it is, and, more especially, Pitt and Addington being what they were, that this union should be durable. Pitt, conscious of superior powers, imagined that the place which he had quitted was now occupied by a mere puppet which he had set up, which he was to govern while he suffered it to remain, and which he was to fling aside as soon as he wished to resume his old position. Nor was it long before he began to pine for the power which he had relinquished. He had been so early raised to supreme authority in the state, and had enjoyed that authority so long, that it had become necessary to him. In retirement his days passed heavily. He could not, like Fox, forget the pleasures and cares of ambition in the company of Euripides or Herodotus. Pride restrained him from intimating, even to his dearest friends, that he wished to be again minister. But he thought it strange, almost ungrateful, that his wish had not been divined, that it had not been anticipated, by one whom he regarded as his deputy.

Addington, on the other hand, was by no means inclined to descend from his high position. He was, indeed, under a delusion much resembling that of Abon Hassan in the Arabian tale. His brain was turned by his short and unreal Caliphate. He took his elevation quite seriously, attributed it to his own merit, and considered himself as one of the great triumvirate of English statesmen, as worthy to make a third with Pitt and Fox.

Such being the feelings of the late minister and of the present minister, a rupture was inevitable; and there was no want of persons bent on making that rupture speedy and violent. Some of these persons wounded Addington's pride by representing him as a lacquey, sent to keep a place on the Treasury bench till his master should find it convenient to come. Others took every opportunity of praising him at Pitt's expense. Pitt had waged a long, a bloody, a costly, an unsuccessful war. Addington had made peace. Pitt had suspended the constitutional liberties of Englishmen. Under Addington those liberties were again enjoyed. Pitt had wasted the public resources. Addington was carefully nursing them. It was sometimes but too evident that these compliments were not unpleasing to Addington. Pitt became cold and reserved. During many months he remained at a distance from London. Meanwhile his most intimate friends, in spite of his declarations that he made no complaint, and that he had no wish for office, exerted themselves to effect a change of ministry. His favourite disciple, George Canning, young, ardent, ambitious, with great powers and great virtues, but with a temper too restless and a wit too satirical for his own happiness, was indefatigable. He spoke; he wrote; he intrigued; he tried to induce a large number of the supporters of the government to sign a round robin desiring a change; he made game of Addington and of Addington's relations in a succession of lively pasquinades. The minister's partisans retorted with equal acrimony, if not with equal vivacity. Pitt could keep out of the affray only by keeping out of politics altogether; and this it soon became impossible for him to do. Had Napoleon, content with the first place among the Sovereigns of the Continent, and with a military reputation surpassing that of Marlborough or of Turenne, devoted himself to the noble task of making France happy by mild administration and wise legislation, our country might have long continued to tolerate a government of fair intentions and feeble abilities. Unhappily, the treaty of Amiens had scarcely been signed, when the restless ambition and the insupportable insolence of the First Consul convinced the great body of the English people that the peace, so eagerly welcomed, was only a precarious armistice. As it became clearer and clearer that a war for the dignity, the independence, the very existence of the nation was at hand, men looked with increasing uneasiness on the weak and languid cabinet which would have to contend against an enemy who united more than the power of Louis the Great to more than the genius of Frederick the Great. It is true that Addington might easily have been a better war minister than Pitt, and could not possibly have been a worse. But Pitt had cast a spell on the public mind. The eloquence, the judgment, the calm and disdainful firmness, which he had, during many years, displayed in Parliament, deluded the world into the belief that he must be eminently qualified to superintend every department of politics, and they imagined, even after the miserable failures of Dunkirk, of Quiberon, and of the Helder, that he was the only statesman who could cope with Bonaparte. This feeling was nowhere stronger than among Addington's own colleagues. The pressure put on him was so strong that he could not help yielding to it; yet, even in yielding, he showed how far he was from knowing his own place. His first proposition was, that some insignificant nobleman should be First Lord of the Treasury and nominal head of the administration, and that the real power should be divided between Pitt and himself, who were to be secretaries of state. Pitt, as might have been expected, refused even to discuss such a scheme, and talked of it with bitter mirth. "Which secretaryship was offered to you?" his friend Wilberforce asked. "Really," said Pitt, "I had not the curiosity to inquire." Addington was frightened into bidding higher. He offered to resign the Treasury to Pitt, on condition that there should be no extensive change in the government. But Pitt would listen to no such terms. Then came a dispute such as often arises after negotiations orally conducted, even when the negotiators are men of strict honour. Pitt gave one account of what had passed; Addington gave another: and though the discrepancies were not such as necessarily implied any intentional violation of truth on either side, both were greatly exasperated.

Meanwhile the quarrel with the First Consul had come to a crisis. On the 16th of May, 1803, the King sent a message calling on the House of Commons to support him in withstanding the ambitious and encroaching policy of France; and, on the 22d, the House took the message into consideration.

Pitt had now been living many months in retirement. There had been a general election since he had spoken in Parliament; and there were two hundred members who had never heard him. It was known that on this occasion he would be in his place; and curiosity was wound up to the highest point. Unfortunately the short-hand writers were, in consequence of some mistake, shut out on that day from the gallery, so that the newspapers contained only a very meagre report of the proceedings. But several accounts of what passed are extant; and of those accounts the most interesting is contained in an unpublished letter, written by a very young member, John William Ward, afterwards Earl of Dudley. When Pitt rose, he was received with loud cheering. At every pause in his speech there was a burst of applause. The peroration is said to have been one of the most animated and magnificent ever heard in Parliament. "Pitt's speech," Fox wrote a few days later, "was admired very much, and very justly. I think it was the best he ever made in that style." The debate was adjourned; and on the second night Fox replied in an oration which, as the most zealous Pittites were forced to acknowledge, left the palm of eloquence doubtful. Addington made a pitiable appearance between the two great rivals; and it was observed that Pitt, while exhorting the Commons to stand resolutely by the executive government against

France, said not a word indicating esteem or friendship for the Prime Minister.

War was speedily declared. The first consul threatened to invade England at the head of the conquerors of Belgium and Italy, and formed a great camp near the Straits of Dover. On the other side of those Straits the whole population of our island was ready to rise up as one man in defence of the soil. At this conjuncture, as at some other great conjunctures in our history, the conjuncture of 1660, for example, and the conjuncture of 1688, there was a general disposition among honest and patriotic men to forget old quarrels, and to regard as a friend every person who was ready, in the existing emergency, to do his part towards the saving of the state. A coalition of all the first men in the country would, at that moment, have been as popular as the coalition of 1783 had been unpopular. Alone in the kingdom the King looked with perfect complacency on a cabinet in which no man superior to himself in genius was to be found, and was so far from being willing to admit all his ablest subjects to office that he was bent on excluding them all.

A few months passed before the different parties which agreed in regarding the government with dislike and contempt came to an understanding with each other. But in the spring of 1804 it became evident that the weakest of ministries would have to defend itself against the strongest of oppositions, an opposition made up of three oppositions, each of which would, separately, have been formidable from ability, and which, when united, were also formidable from number. The party which had opposed the peace, headed by Grenville and Windham, and the party which had opposed the renewal of the war, headed by Fox, concurred in thinking that the men now in power were incapable of either making a good peace or waging a vigorous war. Pitt had, in 1802, spoken for peace against the party of Grenville, and had, in 1803, spoken for war against the party of Fox. But of the capacity of the cabinet, and especially of its chief, for the conduct of great affairs, he thought as meanly as either Fox or Grenville. Questions were easily found on which all the enemies of the government could act cordially together. The unfortunate First Lord of the Treasury, who had, during the earlier months of his administration, been supported by Pitt on one side, and by Fox on the other, now had to answer Pitt, and to be answered by Fox. Two sharp debates, followed by close divisions, made him weary of his post. It was known, too, that the Upper House was even more hostile to him than the Lower, that the Scotch representative peers wavered, that there were signs of mutiny among the bishops. In the cabinet itself there was discord, and, worse than discord, treachery. It was necessary to give way: the ministry was dissolved; and the task of forming a government was entrusted to Pitt.

Pitt was of opinion that there was now an opportunity, such as had never before offered itself, and such as might never offer itself again, of uniting in the public service, on honourable terms, all the eminent talents of the kingdom. The passions to which the French revolution had given birth were extinct. The madness of the innovator and the madness of the alarmist had alike had their day. Jacobinism and anti-Jacobinism had gone out of fashion together. The most liberal statesman did not think that season propitious for schemes of parliamentary reform; and the most conservative statesman could not pretend that there was any occasion for gagging bills and suspensions of the Habeas Corpus Act. The great struggle for independence and national honour occupied all minds; and those who were agreed as to the duty of maintaining that struggle with vigour might well postpone to a more convenient time all disputes about matters comparatively unimportant. Strongly impressed by these considerations, Pitt wished to form a ministry including all the first men in the country. The Treasury he reserved for himself; and to Fox he proposed to assign a share of power little inferior to his own.

The plan was excellent; but the King would not hear of it. Dull, obstinate, unforgiving, and, at that time half mad, he positively refused to admit Fox into his service. Anybody else, even men who had gone as far as Fox, or further than Fox, in what his Majesty considered as Jacobinism, Sheridan, Grey, Erskine, should be graciously received; but Fox never. During several hours Pitt laboured in vain to reason down this senseless antipathy. That he was perfectly sincere there can be no doubt: but it was not enough to be sincere; he should have been resolute. Had he declared himself determined not to take office without Fox, the royal obstinacy would have given way, as it gave way, a few months later, when opposed to the immutable resolution of Lord Grenville. In an evil hour Pitt yielded. He flattered himself with the hope that, though he consented to forego the aid of his illustrious rival, there would still remain ample materials for the formation of an efficient ministry. That hope was cruelly disappointed. Fox entreated his friends to leave personal considerations out of the question, and declared that he would support, with the utmost cordiality, an efficient and patriotic ministry from which he should be himself excluded. Not only his friends, however, but Grenville, and Grenville's adherents, answered, with one voice, that the question was not personal, that a great constitutional principle was at stake, and that they would not take office while a man eminently qualified to render service to the commonwealth was placed under a ban merely because he was disliked at Court. All that was left to Pitt was to construct a government out of the wreck of Addington's feeble administration. The small circle of his personal retainers furnished him with a very few useful assistants, particularly Dundas, who had been created Viscount Melville, Lord Harrowby, and Canning.

Such was the inauspicious manner in which Pitt entered on his second administration. The whole history of that administration was of a piece with the commencement. Almost every month brought some new disaster or disgrace. To the war with France was soon added a war with Spain. The opponents of the minister were numerous, able, and active. His most useful coadjutors he soon lost. Sickness deprived him of the help of Lord Harrowby. It was discovered that Lord Melville had been guilty of highly culpable laxity in transactions relating to public money. He was censured by the House of Commons, driven from office, ejected from the Privy Council, and impeached of high crimes and misdemeanours. The blow fell heavy on Pitt. It gave him, he said in Parliament, a deep pang; and, as he uttered the word pang, his lip quivered, his voice shook, he paused, and his hearers thought that he was about to burst into tears. Such tears shed by Eldon would have moved nothing but laughter. Shed by the warm-hearted and open-hearted Fox, they would have moved sympathy, but would have caused no surprise. But a tear from Pitt would have been something portentous. He suppressed his emotion, however, and proceeded with his usual majestic self-possession.

His difficulties compelled him to resort to various expedients. At one time Addington was persuaded to accept office with a peerage; but he brought no additional strength to the government. Though he went through the form of reconciliation, it was impossible for him to forget the past. While he remained in place he was jealous and punctilious; and he soon retired again. At another time Pitt renewed his efforts to overcome his master's aversion to Fox; and it was rumoured that the King's obstinacy was gradually giving way. But, meanwhile, it was impossible for the minister to conceal from the public eye the decay of his health, and the constant anxiety which gnawed at his heart. His sleep was broken. His food ceased to nourish him. All who passed him in the Park, all who had interviews with him in Downing Street, saw misery written in his face. The peculiar look which he wore during the last months of his life was often pathetically described by Wilberforce, who used to call it the Austerlitz look.

Still the vigour of Pitt's intellectual faculties, and the intrepid haughtiness of his spirit, remained unaltered. He had staked everything on a great venture. He had succeeded in forming another mighty coalition against the French ascendency. The united forces of Austria, Russia, and England might, he hoped, oppose an insurmountable barrier to the ambition of the common enemy. But the genius and energy of Napoleon prevailed. While the English troops were preparing to embark for Germany, while the Russian troops were slowly coming up from Poland, he, with rapidity unprecedented in modern war, moved a hundred thousand men from the shores of the Ocean to the Black Forest, and compelled a great Austrian army to surrender at Ulm. To the first faint rumours of this calamity Pitt would give no credit. He was irritated by the alarms of those around him. "Do not believe a word of it," he said: "it is all a fiction." The next day he received a Dutch newspaper containing the capitulation. He knew no Dutch. It was Sunday; and the public offices were shut. He carried the paper to Lord Malmesbury, who had been minister in Holland; and Lord Malmesbury translated it. Pitt tried to bear up; but the shock was too great; and he went away with death in his face.

The news of the battle of Trafalgar arrived four days later, and seemed for a moment to revive him. Forty-eight hours after that most glorious and most mournful of victories had been announced to the country came the Lord Mayor's day; and Pitt dined at Guildhall. His popularity had declined. But on this occasion the multitude, greatly excited by the recent tidings, welcomed him enthusiastically, took off his horses in Cheapside, and drew his carriage up King Street. When his health was drunk, he returned thanks in two or three of those stately sentences of which he had a boundless command. Several of those who heard him laid up his words in their hearts; for they were the last words that he ever uttered in public: "Let us hope that England, having saved herself by her energy, may save Europe by her example."

This was but a momentary rally. Austerlitz soon completed what Ulm had begun. Early in December Pitt had retired to Bath, in the hope that he might there gather strength for the approaching session. While he was languishing there on his sofa arrived the news that a decisive battle had been fought and lost in Moravia, that the coalition was dissolved, that the Continent was at the feet of France. He sank down under the blow. Ten days later he was so emaciated that his most intimate friends hardly knew him. He came up from Bath by slow journeys, and, on the 11th of January 1806, reached his villa at Putney. Parliament was to meet on the 21st. On the 20th was to be the parliamentary dinner at the house of the First Lord of the Treasury in Downing Street; and the cards were already issued. But the days of the great minister were numbered. The only chance for his life, and that a very slight chance, was that he should resign his office, and pass some months in profound repose. His colleagues paid him very short visits, and carefully avoided political conversation. But his spirit, long accustomed to dominion, could not, even in that extremity, relinquish hopes which everybody but himself perceived to be vain. On the day on which he was carried into his bedroom at Putney, the Marquess Wellesley, whom he had long loved, whom he had sent to govern India, and whose administration had been eminently able, energetic, and successful, arrived in London after an absence of eight years. The friends saw each other once more. There was an affectionate meeting, and a last parting. That it was a last parting Pitt did not seem to be aware. He fancied himself to be recovering, talked on various subjects cheerfully, and with an unclouded mind, and pronounced a warm and discerning eulogium on the Marquess's brother Arthur. "I never," he said, "met with any military man with whom it was so satisfactory to converse." The excitement and exertion of this interview were too much for the sick man. He fainted away; and Lord Wellesley left the house, convinced that the close was fast approaching.

And now members of Parliament were fast coming up to London. The chiefs of the opposition met for the purpose of considering the course to be taken on the first day of the session. It was easy to guess what would be the language of the King's speech, and of the address which would be moved in answer to that speech. An amendment condemning the policy of the government had been prepared, and was to have been proposed in the House of Commons by Lord Henry Petty, a young nobleman who had already won for himself that place in the esteem of his country which, after the lapse of more than half a century, he still retains. He was unwilling, however, to come forward as the accuser of one who was incapable of defending himself. Lord Grenville, who had been informed of Pitt's state by Lord Wellesley, and had been deeply affected by it, earnestly recommended forbearance; and Fox, with characteristic generosity and good nature, gave his voice against attacking his now helpless rival. "Sunt lacrymæ rerum," he said, "et mentem mortalia tangunt." On the first day, therefore, there was no debate. It was rumoured that evening that Pitt was better. But on the following morning his physicians pronounced that there were no hopes. The commanding faculties of which he had been too proud were beginning to fail. His old tutor and friend, the Bishop of Lincoln, informed him of his danger, and gave such religious advice and consolation as a confused and obscured mind could receive. Stories were told of devout sentiments fervently uttered by the dying man. But these stories found no credit with anybody who knew him. Wilberforce pronounced it impossible that they could be true. "Pitt," he added, "was a man who always said less than he thought on such topics." It was asserted in many after-dinner speeches, Grub Street elegies, and academic prize poems and prize declamations, that the great minister died exclaiming, "Oh my country!" This is a fable; but it is true that the last words which he uttered, while he knew what he said, were broken exclamations about the alarming state of public affairs. He ceased to breathe on the morning of the 23rd of January, 1806, the twenty-fifth anniversary of the day on which he first took his seat in Parliament. He was in his forty-seventh year, and had been, during near nineteen years, First Lord of the Treasury, and undisputed chief of the administration. Since parliamentary government was established in England, no English statesman has held supreme power so long. Walpole, it is true, was First Lord of the Treasury during more than twenty years: but it was not till Walpole had been some time First Lord of the Treasury that he could be properly called Prime Minister.

It was moved in the House of Commons that Pitt should be honoured with a public funeral and a monument. The motion was opposed by Fox in a speech which deserves to be studied as a model of good taste and good feeling. The task was the most invidious that ever an orator undertook: but it was performed with a humanity and delicacy which were warmly acknowledged by the mourning friends of him who was gone. The motion was carried by 288 votes to 89.

The 22d of February was fixed for the funeral. The corpse having lain in state during two days in the Painted Chamber, was borne with great pomp to the northern transept of the Abbey. A splendid train of princes, nobles, bishops, and privy councillors followed. The grave of Pitt had been made near to the spot where his great father lay, near also to the spot where his great rival was soon to lie. The sadness of the assistants was beyond that of ordinary mourners. For he whom they were committing to the dust had died of sorrows and anxieties of which none of the survivors could be altogether without a share. Wilberforce, who carried the banner before the hearse, described the awful ceremony with deep feeling. As the coffin descended into the earth, he said, the eagle face of Chatham from above seemed to look down with consternation into the dark house which was receiving all that remained of so much power and glory.

All parties in the House of Commons readily concurred in voting forty thousand pounds to satisfy the demands of Pitt's creditors. Some of his admirers seemed to consider the magnitude of his embarrassments as a circumstance highly honourable to him; but men of sense will probably be of a different opinion. It is far better, no doubt, that a great minister should carry his contempt of money to excess than that he should contaminate his hands with unlawful gain. But it is neither right nor becoming in a man to whom the public has given an income more than sufficient for his comfort and dignity to bequeath to that public a great debt, the effect of mere negligence and profusion. As first Lord of the Treasury and Chancellor of the Exchequer, Pitt never had less than six thousand a year, besides an excellent house. In 1792 he was forced by his royal master's friendly importunity to accept for life the office of Warden of the Cinque Ports, with near four thousand a year more. He had neither wife nor child; he had no needy relations: he had no expensive tastes: he had no long election bills. Had he given but a quarter of an hour a week to the regulation of his household, he would have kept his expenditure within bounds. Or, if he could not spare even a quarter of an hour a week for that purpose, he had numerous friends, excellent men of business, who would have been proud to act as his stewards. One of those friends, the chief of a great commercial house in the city, made an attempt to put the establishment in Downing Street to rights; but in vain. He found that the waste of the servants' hall was almost fabulous. The quantity of butcher's meat charged in the bills was nine hundredweight a week. The consumption of poultry, of fish, and of tea was in proportion. The character of Pitt would have stood higher if with the disinterestedness of Pericles and of De Witt, he had united their dignified frugality.

The memory of Pitt has been assailed, times innumerable, often justly, often unjustly ; but it has suffered much less from his assailants than from his eulogists. For, during many years, his name was the rallying cry of a class of men with whom, at one of those terrible conjunctures which confound all ordinary distinctions, he was accidentally and temporarily connected, but to whom, on almost all great questions of principle, he was diametrically opposed. The haters of parliamentary reform called themselves Pittites, not choosing to remember that Pitt made three motions for parliamentary reform, and that, though he thought that such a reform could not safely be made while the passions excited by the French revolution were raging, he never uttered a word indicating that he should not be prepared at a more convenient season to bring the question forward a fourth time. The toast of Protestant ascendency was drunk on Pitt's birthday by a set of Pittites who could not but be aware that Pitt had resigned his office because he could not carry Catholic emancipation. The defenders of the Test Act called themselves Pittites, though they could not be ignorant that Pitt had laid before George the Third unanswerable reasons for abolishing the Test Act. The enemies of free trade called themselves Pittites, though Pitt was far more deeply imbued with the doctrines of Adam Smith than either Fox or Grey. The very negro-drivers invoked the name of Pitt, whose eloquence was never more conspicuously displayed than when he spoke of the wrongs of the negro. This mythical Pitt, who resembles the genuine Pitt as little as Charlemagne of Ariosto resembles the Charlemagne of Eginhard, has had his day. History will vindicate the real man from calumny disguised under the semblance of adulation, and will exhibit him as what he was, a minister of great talents, honest intentions, and liberal opinions, pre-eminently qualified, intellectually and morally, for the part of a parliamentary leader, and capable of administering with prudence and moderation the government of a prosperous and tranquil country, but unequal to surprising and terrible emergencies, and liable, in such emergencies, to err grievously, both on the side of weakness and on the side of violence.

MISCELLANEOUS POEMS, INSCRIPTIONS, &c.

MISCELLANEOUS POEMS, INSCRIPTIONS, ETC.

EPITAPH ON HENRY MARTYN.

(1812.)

HERE Martyn lies. In Manhood's early bloom
The Christian Hero finds a Pagan tomb.
Religion, sorrowing o'er her favourite son,
Points to the glorious trophies that he won.
Eternal trophies ! not with carnage red,
Not stained with tears by hapless captives shed,
But trophies of the Cross ! for that dear name,
Through every form of danger, death, and shame,
Onward he journeyed to a happier shore,
Where danger, death, and shame assault no more.

LINES TO THE MEMORY OF PITT.

(1813.)

OH BRITAIN ! dear Isle, when the annals of story
  Shall tell of the deeds that thy children have done,
When the strains of each poet shall sing of their glory,
  And the triumphs their skill and their valour have won.

When the olive and palm in thy chaplet are blended,
  When thy arts, and thy fame, and thy commerce increase,
When thy arms through the uttermost coasts are extended,
  And thy war is triumphant, and happy thy peace ;

When the ocean, whose waves like a rampart flow round thee,
  Conveying thy mandates to every shore,
And the empire of nature no longer can bound thee,
  And the world be the scene of thy conquests no more :

Remember the man who in sorrow and danger,
  When thy glory was set, and thy spirit was low,
When thy hopes were o'erturned by the arms of the stranger,
  And thy banners displayed in the halls of the foe,

Stood forth in the tempest of doubt and disaster,
  Unaided, and single, the danger to brave.
Asserted thy claims, and the rights of his master,
  Preserved thee to conquer, and saved thee to save.

A RADICAL WAR SONG.

(1820.)

AWAKE, arise, the hour is come,
  For rows and revolutions ;
There 's no receipt like pike and drum
  For crazy constitutions.
Close, close the shop ! Break, break the loom,
  Desert your hearths and furrows,
And throng in arms to seal the doom
  Of England's rotten boroughs.

We 'll stretch that tort'ring Castlereagh
  On his own Dublin rack, sir ;
We 'll drown the King in Eau de vie,
  The Laureate in his sack, sir,
Old Eldon and his sordid hag
  In molten gold we 'll smother,
And stifle in his own green bag
  The Doctor and his brother.

In chains we 'll hang in fair Guildhall
  The City's famed Recorder,
And next on proud St Stephen's fall,
  Though Wynne should squeak to order.
In vain our tyrants then shall try
  To 'scape our martial law, sir ;
In vain the trembling Speaker cry
  That " Strangers must withdraw," sir.

Copley to hang offends no text ;
  A rat is not a man, sir :
With schedules, and with tax bills next
  We 'll bury pious Van, sir.
The slaves who loved the Income Tax,
  We 'll crush by scores, like mites, sir,
And him, the wretch who freed the blacks,
  And more enslaved the whites, sir.

The peer shall dangle from his gate,
  The bishop from his steeple,
Till all recanting, own, the State
  Means nothing but the People.
We'll fix the church's revenues
  On Apostolic basis,
One coat, one scrip, one pair of shoes
  Shall pay their strange grimaces.

We'll strap the bar's deluding train
  In their own darling halter,
And with his big church bible brain
  The parson at the altar.
Hail glorious hour, when fair Reform
  Shall bless our longing nation,
And Hunt receive commands to form
  A new administration.

Carlisle shall sit enthroned, where sat
  Our Cranmer and our Secker;
And Watson show his snow-white hat
  In England's rich Exchequer.
The breast of Thistlewood shall wear
  Our Wellesley's star and sash, man:
And many a mausoleum fair
  Shall rise to honest Cashman.

Then, then beneath the nine-tailed cat
  Shall they who used it writhe, sir;
And curates lean, and rectors fat,
  Shall dig the ground they tithe, sir.
Down with your Bayleys, and your Bests,
  Your Giffords, and your Gurneys:
We'll clear the island of the pests,
  Which mortals name attorneys.

Down with your sheriffs, and your mayors,
  Your registrars, and proctors,
We'll live without the lawyer's cares,
  And die without the doctor's.
No discontented fair shall pout
  To see her spouse so stupid;
We'll tread the torch of Hymen out,
  And live content with Cupid.

Then, when the high-born and the great
  Are humbled to our level,
On all the wealth of Church and State,
  Like aldermen, we'll revel.
We'll live when hushed the battle's din,
  In smoking and in cards, sir,
In drinking unexcised gin,
  And wooing fair Poissardes, sir.

THE BATTLE OF MONCONTOUR.

(1824.)

Oh, weep for Moncontour! Oh! weep for the hour,
When the children of darkness and evil had power,
When the horsemen of Valois triumphantly trod
On the bosoms that bled for their rights and their God.

Oh, weep for Moncontour! Oh! weep for the slain,
Who for faith and for freedom lay slaughtered in vain;
Oh, weep for the living, who linger to bear
The renegade's shame, or the exile's despair.

One look, one last look, to our cots and our towers,
To the rows of our vines, and the beds of our flowers,
To the church where the bones of our fathers decayed,
Where we fondly had deemed that our own would be laid.

Alas! we must leave thee, dear desolate home,
To the spearmen of Uri, the shavelings of Rome,
To the serpent of Florence, the vulture of Spain,
To the pride of Anjou, and the guile of Lorraine.

Farewell to thy fountains, farewell to thy shades,
To the song of thy youths, and the dance of thy maids,
To the breath of thy gardens, the hum of thy bees,
And the long waving line of the blue Pyrenees.

Farewell, and for ever. The priest and the slave
May rule in the halls of the free and the brave.
Our hearths we abandon; our lands we resign;
But, Father, we kneel to no altar but thine.

THE BATTLE OF NASEBY,

By Obadiah Bind-their-kings-in-chains-and-their-nobles-with-links-of-iron, Serjeant in Ireton's Regiment. (1824.)

Oh! wherefore come ye forth, in triumph from the North,
  With your hands, and your feet, and your raiment all red?
And wherefore doth your rout send forth a joyous shout?
  And whence be the grapes of the wine-press which ye tread?

Oh evil was the root, and bitter was the fruit,
  And crimson was the juice of the vintage that we trod;
For we trampled on the throng of the haughty and the strong,
  Who sate in the high places, and slew the saints of God.

In was about the noon of a glorious day of June,
  That we saw their banners dance, and their cuirasses shine,
And the Man of Blood was there, with his long essenced hair,
  And Astley, and Sir Marmaduke, and Rupert of the Rhine.

Like a servant of the Lord, with his Bible and his sword,
  The General rode along us to form us to the fight,
When a murmuring sound broke out, and swell'd into a shout,
  Among the godless horsemen upon the tyrant's right.

And hark ! like the roar of the billows on the shore,
  The cry of battle rises along their charging line !
For God ! for the Cause ! for the Church ! for the Laws !
  For Charles King of England and Rupert of the Rhine !

The furious German comes, with his clarions and his drums,
  His bravoes of Alsatia, and pages of Whitehall ;
They are bursting on our flanks. Grasp your pikes, close your ranks ;
  For Rupert never comes but to conquer or to fall.

They are here ! They rush on ! We are broken ! We are gone !
  Our left is borne before them like stubble on the blast.
O Lord, put forth thy might ! O Lord, defend the right !
  Stand back to back, in God's name, and fight it to the last.

Stout Skippon hath a wound ; the centre hath given ground :
  Hark ! hark !—What means the trampling of horsemen on our rear ?
Whose banner do I see, boys ? 'Tis he, thank God, 'tis he, boys, .
  Bear up another minute : brave Oliver is here.

Their heads all stooping low, their points all in a row,
  Like a whirlwind on the trees, like a deluge on the dykes,
Our cuirassiers have burst on the ranks of the Accurst,
  And at a shock have scattered the forest of his pikes.

Fast, fast, the gallants ride, in some safe nook to hide
  Their coward heads, predestined to rot on Temple Bar ;
And he—he turns, he flies :—shame on those cruel eyes
  That bore to look on torture, and dare not look on war.

Ho ! comrades, scour the plain ; and, ere ye strip the slain,
  First give another stab to make your search secure,
Then shake from sleeves and pockets their broad-pieces and lockets,
  The tokens of the wanton, the plunder of the poor.

Fools ! your doublets shone with gold, and your hearts were gay and bold,
  When you kissed your lily hands to your lemans to-day;
And to-morrow shall the fox, from her chambers in the rocks,
  Lead forth her tawny cubs to howl above the prey.

Where be your tongues that late mocked at heaven and hell and fate,
  And the fingers that once were so busy with your blades,
Your perfum'd satin clothes, your catches and your oaths,
  Your stage-plays and your sonnets, your diamonds and your spades ?

Down, down, for ever down with the mitre and the crown,
  With the Belial of the Court and the Mammon of the Pope ;
There is woe in Oxford halls : there is wail in Durham's Stalls :
  The Jesuit smites his bosom : the Bishop rends his cope.

And She of the seven hills shall mourn her children's ills,
  And tremble when she thinks on the edge of England's sword ;
And the Kings of earth in fear shall shudder when they hear
  What the hand of God hath wrought for the Houses and the Word.

SERMON IN A CHURCHYARD.

(1825.)

Let pious Damon take his seat,
  With mincing step and languid smile,
And scatter from his 'kerchief sweet,
  Sabæan odours o'er the aisle ;
And spread his little jewelled hand,
  And smile round all the parish beauties,
And pat his curls, and smooth his band,
  Meet prelude to his saintly duties.

Let the thronged audience press and stare,
  Let stifled maidens ply the fan,
Admire his doctrines, and his hair,
  And whisper, " What a good young man ! "
While he explains what seems most clear,
  So clearly that it seems perplexed,
I 'll stay and read my sermon here ;
  And skulls, and bones, shall be the text.

Art thou the jilted dupe of fame ?
  Dost thou with jealous anger pine
Whene'er she sounds some other name,
  With fonder emphasis than thine ?
To thee I preach ; draw near ; attend !
  Look on these bones, thou fool, and see
Where all her scorns and favours end,
  What Byron is, and thou must be.

Dost thou revere, or praise, or trust
  Some clod like those that here we spurn ;
Some thing that sprang like thee from dust,
  And shall like thee to dust return ?
Dost thou rate statesmen, heroes, wits,
  At one sear leaf, or wandering feather ?
Behold the black, damp, narrow pits,
  Where they and thou must lie together.

Dost thou beneath the smile or frown
  Of some vain woman bend thy knee ?
Here take thy stand, and trample down
  Things that were once as fair as she.
Here rave of her ten thousand graces,
  Bosom, and lip, and eye, and chin,
While, as in scorn, the fleshless faces
  Of Hamiltons and Waldegraves grin.

Whate'er thy losses or thy gains,
  Whate'er thy projects or thy fears,
Whate'er the joys, whate'er the pains,
  That prompt thy baby smiles and tears;
Come to my school, and thou shalt learn,
  In one short hour of placid thought,
A stoicism, more deep, more stern,
  Than ever Zeno's porch hath taught.

The plots and feats of those that press
  To seize on titles, wealth, or power,
Shall seem to thee a game of chess,
  Devised to pass a tedious hour.
What matters it to him who fights
  For shows of unsubstantial good,
Whether his Kings, and Queens, and Knights,
  Be things of flesh, or things of wood?

We check, and take; exult, and fret;
  Our plans extend, our passions rise,
Till in our ardour we forget
  How worthless is the victor's prize.
Soon fades the spell, soon comes the night:
  Say will it not be then the same,
Whether we played the black or white,
  Whether we lost or won the game?

Dost thou among these hillocks stray,
  O'er some dear idol's tomb to moan?
Know that thy foot is on the clay
  Of hearts once wretched as thy own.
How many a father's anxious schemes,
  How many rapturous thoughts of lovers,
How many a mother's cherished dreams,
  The swelling turf before thee covers!

Here for the living, and the dead,
  The weepers and the friends they weep,
Hath been ordained the same cold bed,
  The same dark night, the same long sleep;
Why shouldest thou writhe, and sob, and rave
  O'er those with whom thou soon must be?
Death his own sting shall cure—the grave
  Shall vanquish its own victory.

Here learn that all the griefs and joys,
  Which now torment, which now beguile,
Are children's hurts, and children's toys,
  Scarce worthy of one bitter smile.
Here learn that pulpit, throne, and press,
  Sword, sceptre, lyre, alike are frail,
That science is a blind man's guess,
  And History a nurse's tale.

Here learn that glory and disgrace,
  Wisdom and folly, pass away,
That mirth hath its appointed space,
  That sorrow is but for a day;
That all we love, and all we hate,
  That all we hope, and all we fear,
Each mood of mind, each turn of fate,
  Must end in dust and silence here.

TRANSLATION FROM A. V. ARNAULT.

Fables: Livre v. *Fable* 16.

(1826.)

THOU poor leaf, so sear and frail,
Sport of every wanton gale,
Whence, and whither, dost thou fly,
Through this bleak autumnal sky?
On a noble oak I grew,
Green, and broad, and fair to view;
But the Monarch of the shade
By the tempest low was laid.
From that time, I wander o'er
Wood, and valley, hill, and moor,
Wheresoe'er the wind is blowing,
Nothing caring, nothing knowing:
Thither go I, whither goes,
Glory's laurel, Beauty's rose.

——— De ta tige détachée,
Pauvre feuille desséchée
Où vas-tu?—Je n'en sais rien.
L'orage a frappé le chêne
Qui seul était mon soutien.
De son inconstante haleine,
Le zéphyr ou l'aquilon
Depuis ce jour me promène
De la forêt à la plaine,
De la montagne au vallon.
Je vais où le vent me mène,
Sans me plaindre ou m'effrayer,
Je vais où va toute chose,
Où va la feuille de rose
Et la feuille de laurier.

DIES IRÆ.

(1826.)

On that great, that awful day,
This vain world shall pass away.
Thus the sibyl sang of old,
Thus hath holy David told.
There shall be a deadly fear
When the Avenger shall appear,
And unveiled before his eye
All the works of man shall lie.
Hark ! to the great trumpet's tones
Pealing o'er the place of bones :
Hark ! it waketh from their bed
All the nations of the dead,—
In a countless throng to meet,
At the eternal judgment seat.
Nature sickens with dismay,
Death may not retain its prey ;
And before the Maker stand
All the creatures of his hand.
The great book shall be unfurled,
Whereby God shall judge the world :
What was distant shall be near,
What was hidden shall be clear.
To what shelter shall I fly ?
To what guardian shall I cry ?
Oh, in that destroying hour,
Source of goodness, Source of power,
Show thou, of thine own free grace,
Help unto a helpless race.
Though I plead not at thy throne
Aught that I for thee have done,
Do not thou unmindful be,
Of what thou hast borne for me :
Of the wandering, of the scorn,
Of the scourge, and of the thorn.
Jesus, hast *thou* borne the pain,
And hath all been borne in vain ?
Shall thy vengeance smite the head
For whose ransom thou hast bled ?
Thou, whose dying blessing gave
Glory to a guilty slave :
Thou, who from the crew unclean
Didst release the Magdalene :
Shall not mercy vast and free,
Evermore be found in thee ?
Father, turn on me thine eyes,
See my blushes, hear my cries ;
Faint though be the cries I make,
Save me for thy mercy's sake,
From the worm, and from the fire,
From the torments of thine ire.

Fold me with the sheep that stand
Pure and safe at thy right hand.
Hear thy guilty child implore thee,
Rolling in the dust before thee.
Oh the horrors of that day !
When this frame of sinful clay,
Starting from its burial place,
Must behold thee face to face.
Hear and pity, hear and aid,
Spare the creatures thou hast made.
Mercy, mercy, save, forgive,
Oh, who shall look on thee and live ?

THE MARRIAGE OF TIRZAH AND AHIRAD.

(1827.)

GENESIS VI. 3.

It is the dead of night :
Yet more than noonday light
Beams far and wide from many a gorgeous hall.
Unnumbered harps are tinkling,
Unnumbered lamps are twinkling,
In the great city of the fourfold wall.
By the brazen castle's moat,
The sentry hums a livelier note.
The ship-boy chaunts a shriller lay
From the galleys in the bay.
Shout, and laugh, and hurrying feet
Sound from mart and square and street,
From the breezy laurel shades,
From the granite colonnades,
From the golden statue's base,
From the stately market-place,
Where, upreared by captive hands,
The great Tower of Triumph stands,
All its pillars in a blaze
With the many-coloured rays,
Which lanthorns of ten thousand dyes
Shed on ten thousand panoplies.
But closest is the throng,
And loudest is the song,
In that sweet garden by the river side,
The abyss of myrtle bowers,
The wilderness of flowers,
Where Cain hath built the palace of his pride.
Such palace ne'er shall be again
Among the dwindling race of men.

From all its threescore gates the light
  Of gold and steel afar was thrown ;
Two hundred cubits rose in height
  The outer wall of polished stone.
  On the top was ample space
  For a gallant chariot race,
  Near either parapet a bed
  Of the richest mould was spread,
Where amidst flowers of every scent and hue
Rich orange trees, and palms, and giant cedars grew.

  In the mansion's public court
  All is revel, song, and sport ;
For there, till morn shall tint the east,
Menials and guards prolong the feast.
The boards with painted vessels shine ;
The marble cisterns foam with wine.
A hundred dancing girls are there
With zoneless waists and streaming hair ;
And countless eyes with ardour gaze,
  And countless hands the measure beat,
As mix and part in amorous maze
  Those floating arms and bounding feet.
But none of all the race of Cain,
  Save those whom he hath deigned to grace
With yellow robe and sapphire chain,
  May pass beyond that outer space.
  For now within the painted hall
  The Firstborn keeps high festival.
Before the glittering valves all night
  Their post the chosen captains hold.
Above the portal's stately height
  The legend flames in lamps of gold :
"In life united and in death
    "May Tirzah and Ahirad be,
"The bravest he of all the sons of Seth,
    "Of all the house of Cain the loveliest she."

Through all the climates of the earth
This night is given to festal mirth.
The long continued war is ended.
The long divided lines are blended.
Ahirad's bow shall now no more
Make fat the wolves with kindred gore.
The vultures shall expect in vain
Their banquet from the sword of Cain.
Without a guard the herds and flocks
Along the frontier moors and rocks
  From eve to morn may roam ;
Nor shriek, nor shout, nor reddened sky,
Shall warn the startled hind to fly
  From his beloved home.
Nor to the pier shall burghers crowd
  With straining necks and faces pale,

And think that in each flitting cloud
They see a hostile sail.
The peasant without fear shall guide
Down smooth canal or river wide
His painted bark of cane,
Fraught, for some proud bazaar's arcades,
With chestnuts from his native shades,
And wine, and milk, and grain.
Search round the peopled globe to-night,
Explore each continent and isle,
There is no door without a light,
No face without a smile.
The noblest chiefs of either race,
From north and south, from west and east,
Crowd to the painted hall to grace
The pomp of that atoning feast.
With widening eyes and labouring breath
Stand the fair-haired sons of Seth,
As bursts upon their dazzled sight
The endless avenue of light,
The bowers of tulip, rose, and palm,
The thousand cressets fed with balm,
The silken vests, the boards piled high
With amber, gold, and ivory,
The crystal founts whence sparkling flow
The richest wines o'er beds of snow,
The walls where blaze in living dyes
The king's three hundred victories.
The heralds point the fitting seat
To every guest in order meet,
And place the highest in degree
Nearest th' imperial canopy.
Beneath its broad and gorgeous fold,
With naked swords and shields of gold,
Stood the seven princes of the tribes of Nod.
Upon an ermine carpet lay
Two tiger cubs in furious play,
Beneath the emerald throne where sat the signed of God.

Over that ample forehead white
The thousandth year returneth.
Still, on its commanding height,
With a fierce and blood-red light,
The fiery token burneth.
Wheresoe'er that mystic star
Blazeth in the van of war,
Back recoil before its ray
Shield and banner, bow and spear,
Maddened horses break away
From the trembling charioteer.
The fear of that stern king doth lie
On all that live beneath the sky ;
All shrink before the mark of his despair,
The seal of that great curse which he alone can bear.

Blazing in pearls and diamonds' sheen.
Tirzah, the young Ahirad's bride,
Of humankind the destined queen,
Sits by her great forefather's side.
The jetty curls, the forehead high,
The swanlike neck, the eagle face,
The glowing cheek, the rich dark eye,
Proclaim her of the elder race.
With flowing locks of auburn hue,
And features smooth, and eye of blue,
Timid in love as brave in arms,
The gentle heir of Seth askance
Snatches a bashful, ardent glance
At her majestic charms ;
Blest when across that brow high musing flashes
A deeper tint of rose,
Thrice blest when from beneath the silken lashes
Of her proud eye she throws
The smile of blended fondness and disdain
Which marks the daughters of the house of Cain.

All hearts are light around the hall
Save his who is the lord of all.
The painted roofs, the attendant train,
The lights, the banquet, all are vain.
He sees them not. His fancy strays
To other scenes and other days.
A cot by a lone forest's edge,
A fountain murmuring through the trees,
A garden with a wildflower hedge,
Whence sounds the music of the bees,
A little flock of sheep at rest
Upon a mountain's swarthy breast.
On his rude spade he seems to lean
Beside the well remembered stone,
Rejoicing o'er the promised green
Of the first harvest man hath sown.
He sees his mother's tears ;
His father's voice he hears,
Kind as when first it praised his youthful skill.
And soon a seraph-child,
In boyish rapture wild,
With a light crook comes bounding from the hill,
Kisses his hands, and strokes his face,
And nestles close in his embrace.
In his adamantine eye
None might discern his agony ;
But they who had grown hoary next his side,
And read his stern dark face with deepest skill,
Could trace strange meanings in that lip of pride,
Which for one moment quivered and was still.
No time for them to mark or him to feel
Those inward stings ; for clarion, flute, and lyre,
And the rich voices of a countless quire,
Burst on the ear in one triumphant peal.

In breathless transport sits the admiring throng,
As sink and swell the notes of Jubal's lofty song.

"Sound the timbrel, strike the lyre,
Wake the trumpet's blast of fire,
  Till the gilded arches ring.
Empire, victory, and fame,
Be ascribed unto the name
  Of our father and our king.
Of the deeds which he hath done,
Of the spoils which he hath won,
  Let his grateful children sing.
When the deadly fight was fought,
When the great revenge was wrought,
When on the slaughtered victims lay
The minion stiff and cold as they,
Doomed to exile, sealed with flame,
From the west the wanderer came.
Six score years and six he strayed
A hunter through the forest shade.
The lion's shaggy jaws he tore,
To earth he smote the foaming boar,
He crushed the dragon's fiery crest,
And scaled the condor's dizzy nest;
Till hardy sons and daughters fair
Increased around his woodland lair.
Then his victorious bow unstrung
On the great bison's horn he hung.
Giraffe and elk he left to hold
  The wilderness of boughs in peace,
And trained his youth to pen the fold,
  To press the cream, and weave the fleece.
As shrunk the streamlet in its bed,
  As black and scant the herbage grew,
O'er endless plains his flocks he led
  Still to new brooks and pastures new.
So strayed he till the white pavilions
Of his camp were told by millions,
Till his children's households seven
Were numerous as the stars of heaven.
Then he bade us rove no more;
  And in the place that pleased him best,
On the great river's fertile shore,
  He fixed the city of his rest.
He taught us then to bind the sheaves,
  To strain the palm's delicious milk,
And from the dark green mulberry leaves
  To cull the filmy silk.
Then first from straw-built mansions roamed
  O'er flower-beds trim the skilful bees;
Then first the purple wine vats foamed
  Around the laughing peasant's knees;
And olive-yards, and orchards green,
O'er all the hills of Nod were seen.

"Of our father and our king
Let his grateful children sing.
From him our race its being draws,
His are our arts, and his our laws.
Like himself he bade us be,
Proud, and brave, and fierce, and free.
True, through every turn of fate,
In our friendship and our hate.
Calm to watch, yet prompt to dare;
Quick to feel, yet firm to bear;
Only timid, only weak,
Before sweet woman's eye and cheek.
We will not serve, we will not know,
The God who is our father's foe.
In our proud cities to his name
No temples rise, no altars flame.
Our flocks of sheep, our groves of spice,
To him afford no sacrifice.
Enough that once the House of Cain
Hath courted with oblation vain
    The sullen power above.
Henceforth we bear the yoke no more;
The only gods whom we adore
    Are glory, vengeance, love.

  "Of our father and our king
  Let his grateful children sing.
What eye of living thing may brook
On his blazing brow to look?
What might of living thing may stand
Against the strength of his right hand?
First he led his armies forth
Against the Mammoths of the north,
What time they wasted in their pride
Pasture and vineyard far and wide.
Then the White River's icy flood
Was thawed with fire and dyed with blood,
And heard for many a league the sound
Of the pine forests blazing round,
And the death-howl and trampling din
Of the gigantic herd within.
From the surging sea of flame
Forth the tortured monsters came:
As of breakers on the shore
Was their onset and their roar;
As the cedar-trees of God
Stood the stately ranks of Nod.
One long night and one short day
The sword was lifted up to slay.
  Then marched the firstborn and his sons
O'er the white ashes of the wood,
And counted of that savage brood
  Nine times nine thousand skeletons.

"On the snow with carnage red
The wood is piled, the skins are spread.

A thousand fires illume the sky;
Round each a hundred warriors lie.
But, long ere half the night was spent,
Forth thundered from the golden tent
The rousing voice of Cain.
A thousand trumps in answer rang
And fast to arms the warriors sprang
O'er all the frozen plain.
A herald from the wealthy bay
Hath come with tidings of dismay.
From the western ocean's coast
Seth hath led a countless host,
And vows to slay with fire and sword
All who call not on the Lord.
His archers hold the mountain forts;
His light armed ships blockade the ports;
His horsemen tread the harvest down.
On twelve proud bridges he hath passed
The river dark with many a mast,
And pitched his mighty camp at last
Before the imperial town.

"On the south and on the west,
Closely was the city prest.
Before us lay the hostile powers.
The breach was wide between the towers.
Pulse and meal within were sold
For a double weight of gold.
Our mighty father had gone forth
Two hundred marches to the north.
Yet in that extreme of ill
We stoutly kept his city still;
And swore beneath his royal wall,
Like his true sons to fight and fall.

"Hark, hark, to gong and horn,
Clarion, and fife, and drum,
The morn, the fortieth morn,
Fixed for the great assault is come.
Between the camp and city spreads
A waving sea of helmed heads.
From the royal car of Seth
Was hung the blood-red flag of death:
At sight of that thrice-hallowed sign
Wide flew at once each banner's fold;
The captains clashed their arms of gold;
The war cry of Elohim rolled
Far down their endless line.
On the northern hills afar
Pealed an answering note of war.
Soon the dust in whirlwinds driven,
Rushed across the northern heaven.
Beneath its shroud came thick and loud
The tramp as of a countless crowd;
And at intervals were seen
Lance and hauberk glancing sheen;

And at intervals were heard
Charger's neigh and battle word.

"Oh what a rapturous cry
From all the city's thousand spires arose,
With what a look the hollow eye
Of the lean watchman glared upon the foes,
With what a yell of joy the mother pressed
The moaning baby to her withered breast;
When through the swarthy cloud that veiled the plain
Burst on his children's sight the flaming brow of Cain!"

There paused perforce that noble song;
For from all the joyous throng,
Burst forth a rapturous shout which drowned
Singer's voice and trumpet's sound.
Thrice that stormy clamour fell,
Thrice rose again with mightier swell.
The last and loudest roar of all
Had died along the painted wall.
The crowd was hushed; the minstrel train
Prepared to strike the chords again;
When on each ear distinctly smote
A low and wild and wailing note.
It moans again. In mute amaze
Menials, and guests, and harpers gaze.
They look above, beneath, around,
No shape doth own that mournful sound.
It comes not from the tuneful quire;
It comes not from the feasting peers.
There is no tone of earthly lyre
So soft, so sad, so full of tears.
Then a strange horror came on all
Who sate at that high festival.
The far famed harp, the harp of gold,
Dropped from Jubal's trembling hold.
Frantic with dismay the bride
Clung to her Ahirad's side.
And the corpse-like hue of dread
Ahirad's haughty face o'erspread.
Yet not even in that agony of awe
Did the young leader of the fair-haired race
From Tirzah's shuddering grasp his hand withdraw,
Or turn his eyes from Tirzah's livid face.
The tigers to their lord retreat,
And crouch and whine beneath his feet.
Prone sink to earth the golden shielded seven.
All hearts are cowed save his alone
Who sits upon the emerald throne;
For he hath heard Elohim speak from heaven.
Still thunders in his ear the peal;
Still blazes on his front the seal:
And on the soul of the proud king
No terror of created thing
From sky, or earth, or hell, hath power
Since that unutterable hour.

He rose to speak, but paused, and listening stood,
Not daunted, but in sad and curious mood,
With knitted brow, and searching eye of fire.
A deathlike silence sank on all around,
And through the boundless space was heard no sound,
Save the soft tones of that mysterious lyre.
Broken, faint, and low,
At first the numbers flow.
Louder, deeper, quicker, still
Into one fierce peal they swell,
And the echoing palace fill
With a strange funereal yell.
A voice comes forth. But what, or where?
On the earth, or in the air?
Like the midnight winds that blow
Round a lone cottage in the snow,
With howling swell and sighing fall,
It wails along the trophied hall.
In such a wild and dreary moan
The watches of the Seraphim
Poured out all night their plaintive hymn
Before the eternal throne.
Then, when from many a heavenly eye
Drops as of earthly pity fell
For her who had aspired too high,
For him who loved too well.
When, stunned by grief, the gentle pair
From the nuptial garden fair,
Linked in a sorrowful caress,
Strayed through the untrodden wilderness;
And close behind their footsteps came
The desolating sword of flame,
And drooped the cedared alley's pride,
And fountains shrank, and roses died.

"Rejoice, O Son of God, rejoice,"
Sang that melancholy voice,
"Rejoice, the maid is fair to see;
The bower is decked for her and thee;
The ivory lamps around it throw
A soft and pure and mellow glow.
Where'er the chastened lustre falls
On roof or cornice, floor or walls,
Woven of pink and rose appear
Such words as love delights to hear.
The breath of myrrh, the lute's soft sound,
Float through the moonlight galleries round.
O'er beds of violet and through groves of spice,
Lead thy proud bride into the nuptial bower;
For thou hast bought her with a fearful price,
And she hath dowered thee with a fearful dower.
The price is life. The dower is death.
Accursed loss! Accursed gain!
For her thou givest the blessedness of Seth,
And to thine arms she brings the curse of Cain.

Round the dark curtains of the fiery throne
  Pauses awhile the voice of sacred song :
From all the angelic ranks goes forth a groan,
  'How long, O Lord, how long?'
The still small voice makes answer, 'Wait and see,
Oh sons of glory, what the end shall be.'

"But, in the outer darkness of the place
Where God hath shown his power without his grace,
Is laughter and the sound of glad acclaim,
  Loud as when, on wings of fire,
  Fulfilled of his malign desire,
From Paradise the conquering serpent came.
The giant ruler of the morning star
  From off his fiery bed
  Lifts high his stately head,
Which Michael's sword hath marked with many a scar.
At his voice the pit of hell
Answers with a joyous yell,
And flings her dusky portals wide
For the bridegroom and the bride.

"But louder still shall be the din
In the halls of Death and Sin,
When the full measure runneth o'er,
When mercy can endure no more,
When he who vainly proffers grace,
Comes in his fury to deface
  The fair creation of his hand ;
When from the heaven streams down amain
For forty days the sheeted rain ;
And from his ancient barriers free,
With a deafening roar the sea
  Comes foaming up the land.
Mother, cast thy babe aside :
Bridegroom, quit thy virgin bride :
Brother, pass thy brother by :
'Tis for life, for life, ye fly.
Along the drear horizon raves
The swift advancing line of waves.
On : on : their frothy crests appear
Each moment nearer, and more near.
Urge the dromedary's speed ;
Spur to death the reeling steed ;
If perchance ye yet may gain
The mountains that o'erhang the plain.

"Oh thou haughty land of Nod,
Hear the sentence of thy God.
Thou hast said, 'Of all the hills
Whence, after autumn rains, the rills
  In silver trickle down,
The fairest is that mountain white
Which intercepts the morning light
  From Cain's imperial town.

On its first and gentlest swell
Are pleasant halls where nobles dwell;
And marble porticoes are seen
Peeping through terraced gardens green.
Above are olives, palms, and vines;
And higher yet the dark-blue pines;
And highest on the summit shines
  The crest of everlasting ice.
Here let the God of Abel own
That human art hath wonders shown
  Beyond his boasted paradise.'

"Therefore on that proud mountain's crown
  Thy few surviving sons and daughters
Shall see their latest sun go down
  Upon a boundless waste of waters.
None salutes and none replies;
  None heaves a groan or breathes a prayer
They crouch on earth with tearless eyes,
  And clenched hands, and bristling hair.
The rain pours on: no star illumes
  The blackness of the roaring sky.
And each successive billow booms
  Nigher still and still more nigh.
And now upon the howling blast
The wreaths of spay come thick and fast;
And a great billow by the tempest curled
  Falls with a thundering crash; and all is o'er.
And what is left of all this glorious world?
  A sky without a beam, a sea without a shore.

"Oh thou fair land, where from their starry home
Cherub and seraph oft delight to roam,
Thou city of the thousand towers,
  Thou palace of the golden stairs,
Ye gardens of perennial flowers,
  Ye moted gates, ye breezy squares;
Ye parks amidst whose branches high
Oft peers the squirrel's sparkling eye;
Ye vineyards, in whose trellised shade
Pipes many a youth to many a maid;
Ye ports where rides the gallant ship,
  Ye marts where wealthy burghers meet;
Ye dark green lanes which know the trip
  Of woman's conscious feet;
Ye grassy meads where, when the day is done,
  The shepherd pens his fold;
Ye purple moors on which the setting sun
  Leaves a rich fringe of gold;
Ye wintry deserts where the larches grow;
Ye mountains on whose everlasting snow
  No human foot hath trod;
Many a fathom shall ye sleep
Beneath the grey and endless deep,
  In the great day of the revenge of God."

THE COUNTRY CLERGYMAN'S TRIP TO CAMBRIDGE.

AN ELECTION BALLAD. (1827.)

As I sate down to breakfast in state,
  At my living of Tithing-cum-Boring,
With Betty beside me to wait,
  Came a rap that almost beat the door in.
I laid down my basin of tea,
  And Betty ceased spreading the toast,
"As sure as a gun, sir," said she,
  "That must be the knock of the post."

A letter—and free—bring it here—
  I have no correspondent who franks.
No! Yes! Can it be? Why, my dear,
  'Tis our glorious, our Protestant Bankes.
"Dear sir, as I know you desire
  That the Church should receive due protection,
I humbly presume to require
  Your aid at the Cambridge election.

"It has lately been brought to my knowledge,
  That the Ministers fully design
To suppress each cathedral and college,
  And eject every learned divine.
To assist this detestable scheme
  Three nuncios from Rome are come over;
They left Calais on Monday by steam,
  And landed to dinner at Dover.

"An army of grim Cordeliers,
  Well furnished with relics and vermin,
Will follow, Lord Westmoreland fears,
  To effect what their chiefs may determine.
Lollard's bower, good authorities say,
  Is again fitting up for a prison;
And a wood-merchant told me to-day
  'Tis a wonder how faggots have risen.

"The finance scheme of Canning contains
  A new Easter-offering tax;
And he means to devote all the gains
  To a bounty on thumb-screws and racks.
Your living, so neat and compact—
  Pray, don't let the news give you pain!—
Is promised, I know for a fact,
  To an olive-faced Padre from Spain."

I read, and I felt my heart bleed,
  Sore wounded with horror and pity;
So I flew, with all possible speed,
  To our Protestant champion's committee.

True gentlemen, kind and well-bred !
  No fleering ! no distance ! no scorn !
They asked after my wife who is dead,
  And my children who never were born.

They then, like high-principled Tories,
  Called our Sovereign unjust and unsteady,
And assailed him with scandalous stories,
  Till the coach for the voters was ready.
That coach might be well called a casket
  Of learning and brotherly love :
There were parsons in boot and in basket ;
  There were parsons below and above.

There were Sneaker and Griper, a pair
  Who stick to Lord Mulesby like leeches ;
A smug chaplain of plausible air,
  Who writes my Lord Goslingham's speeches.
Dr Buzz, who alone is a host,
  Who, with arguments weighty as lead,
Proves six times a week in the Post
  That flesh somehow differs from bread.

Dr Nimrod, whose orthodox toes
  Are seldom withdrawn from the stirrup ;
Dr Humdrum, whose eloquence flows,
  Like droppings of sweet poppy syrup ;
Dr Rosygill puffing and fanning,
  And wiping away perspiration ;
Dr Humbug who proved Mr Canning
  The beast in St John's Revelation.

A layman can scarce form a notion
  Of our wonderful talk on the road ;
Of the learning, the wit, and devotion,
  Which almost each syllable showed :
Why divided allegiance agrees
  So ill with our free constitution ;
How Catholics swear as they please,
  In hope of the priest's absolution ;

How the Bishop of Norwich had bartered
  His faith for a legate's commission ;
How Lyndhurst, afraid to be martyr'd,
  Had stooped to a base coalition ;
How Papists are cased from compassion
  By bigotry, stronger than steel ;
How burning would soon come in fashion,
  And how very bad it must feel.

We were all so much touched and excited
  By a subject so direly sublime,
That the rules of politeness were slighted,
  And we all of us talked at a time ;

And in tones, which each moment grew louder,
  Told how we should dress for the show,
And where we should fasten the powder,
  And if we should bellow or no.

Thus from subject to subject we ran,
  And the journey passed pleasantly o'er,
Till at last Dr Humdrum began ;
  From that time I remember no more.
At Ware he commenced his prelection,
  In the dullest of clerical drones ;
And when next I regained recollection
  We were rumbling o'er Trumpington stones.

SONG.

(1827.)

  O STAY, Madonna ! stay ;
  'Tis not the dawn of day
That marks the skies with yonder opal streak :
  The stars in silence shine ;
  Then press thy lips to mine,
And rest upon my neck thy fervid cheek.

  O sleep, Madonna ! sleep ;
  Leave me to watch and weep
O'er the sad memory of departed joys,
  O'er hope's extinguished beam,
  O'er fancy's vanished dream ;
O'er all that nature gives and man destroys.

  O wake, Madonna ! wake ;
  Even now the purple lake
Is dappled o'er with amber flakes of light ;
  A glow is on the hill ;
  And every trickling rill
In golden threads leaps down from yonder height.

  O fly, Madonna ! fly,
  Lest day and envy spy
What only love and night may safely know :
  Fly, and tread softly, dear !
  Lest those who hate us hear
The sounds of thy light footsteps as they go.

POLITICAL GEORGICS.

(MARCH 1828.)

"Quid faciat lætas segetes," &c.

How cabinets are form'd, and how destroy'd,
How Tories are confirm'd, and Whigs decoy'd,
How in nice times a prudent man should vote,
At what conjuncture he should turn his coat,
The truths fallacious, and the candid lies,
And all the lore of sleek majorities,
I sing, great Premier. Oh, mysterious two,
Lords of our fate, the Doctor and the Jew,
If, by your care enriched, the aspiring clerk
Quits the close alley for the breezy park,
And Dolly's chops and Reid's entire resigns
For odorous fricassees and costly wines;
And you, great pair, through Windsor's shades who rove,
The Faun and Dryad of the conscious grove;
All, all inspire me, for of all I sing,
Doctor and Jew, and M——s and K——g.
Thou, to the maudlin muse of Rydal dear;
Thou more than Neptune, Lowther, lend thine ear.
At Neptune's voice the horse, with flowing mane
And pawing hoof, sprung from th' obedient plain;
But at thy word the yawning earth, in fright,
Engulf'd the victor steed from mortal sight.
Haste from thy woods, mine Arbuthnot, with speed,
Rich woods, where lean Scotch cattle love to feed:
Let Gaffer Gooch and Boodle's patriot band,
Fat from the leanness of a plundered land,
True Cincinnati, quit their patent ploughs,
Their new steam-harrows, and their premium sows;
Let all in bulky majesty appear,
Roll the dull eye, and yawn th' unmeaning cheer.
Ye veteran Swiss, of senatorial wars,
Who glory in your well-earned sticks and stars;
Ye diners-out from whom we guard our spoons;
Ye smug defaulters; ye obscene buffoons;
Come all, of every race and size and form,
Corruption's children, brethren of the worm;
From those gigantic monsters who devour
The pay of half a squadron in an hour,
To those foul reptiles, doomed to night and scorn,
Of filth and stench equivocally born;
From royal tigers down to toads and lice;
From Bathursts, Clintons, Fanes, to H—— and P——;
Thou last, by habit and by nature blest
With every gift which serves a courtier best,
The lap-dog spittle, the hyæna bile,
The maw of shark, the tear of crocodile,

Whate'er high station, undetermined yet,
Awaits thee in the longing Cabinet,—
Whether thou seat thee in the room of Peel,
Or from Lord Prig extort the Privy Seal,
Or our Field-marshal Treasurer fix on thee,
A legal admiral, to rule the sea,
Or Chancery-suits, beneath thy well known reign,
Turn to their nap of fifty years again ;
(Already L——, prescient of his fate,
Yields half his woolsack to thy mightier weight ;)
Oh ! Eldon, in whatever sphere thou shine,
For opposition sure will ne'er be thine,
Though scowls apart the lonely pride of Grey,
Though Devonshire proudly flings his staff away,
Though Lansdowne, trampling on his broken chain,
Shine forth the Lansdowne of our hearts again,
Assist me thou ; for well I deem, I see
An abstract of my ample theme in thee.
Thou, as thy glorious self hath justly said,
From earliest youth, wast pettifogger bred,
And, raised to power by fortune's fickle will,
Art head and heart a pettifogger still.
So, where once Fleet-ditch ran confessed, we vie
A crowded mart and stately avenue ;
But the black stream beneath runs on the same,
Still brawls in W——'s key,—still stinks like H——'s name.

THE DELIVERANCE OF VIENNA.

TRANSLATED FROM VINCENZIO DA FILICAIA.

(*Published in the "Winter's Wreath," Liverpool*, 1828.)

"Le corde d'oro elette," &c.

  THE chords, the sacred chords of gold,
  Strike, O Muse, in measure bold ;
And frame a sparkling wreath of joyous songs
For that great God to whom revenge belongs.
    Who shall resist his might,
    Who marshals for the fight
Earthquake and thunder, hurricane and flame ?
    He smote the haughty race
    Of unbelieving Thrace,
And turned their rage to fear, their pride to shame.
    He looked in wrath from high,
      Upon their vast array ;
    And, in the twinkling of an eye,
    Tambour, and trump, and battle-cry,
    And steeds, and turbaned infantry,
      Passed like a dream away.
Such power defends the mansions of the just :

But, like a city without walls,
The grandeur of the mortal falls
Who glories in his strength, and makes not God his trust.
The proud blasphemers thought all earth their own;
They deemed that soon the whirlwind of their ire
Would sweep down tower and palace, dome and spire,
The Christian altars and the Augustan throne.
And soon, they cried, shall Austria bow
To the dust her lofty brow.
The princedoms of Almayne
Shall wear the Phrygian chain;
In humbler waves shall vassal Tiber roll;
And Rome a slave forlorn,
Her laurelled tresses shorn,
Shall feel our iron in her inmost soul.
Who shall bid the torrent stay?
Who shall bar the lightning's way?
Who arrest the advancing van
Of the fiery Ottoman?

As the curling smoke-wreaths fly
When fresh breezes clear the sky,
Passed away each swelling boast
Of the misbelieving host.
From the Hebrus rolling far
Came the murky cloud of war,
And in shower and tempest dread
Burst on Austria's fenceless head.
But not for vaunt or threat
Didst Thou, O Lord, forget
The flock so dearly bought, and loved so well.

Even in the very hour
Of guilty pride and power
Full on the circumcised Thy vengeance fell.
Then the fields were heaped with dead,
Then the streams with gore were red,
And every bird of prey, and every beast,
From wood and cavern thronged to Thy great feast.

What terror seized the fiends obscene of Nile!
How wildly, in his place of doom beneath,
Arabia's lying prophet gnashed his teeth,
And cursed his blighted hopes and wasted guile!
When, at the bidding of Thy sovereign might,
Flew on their destined path
Thy messengers of wrath,
Riding on storms and wrapped in deepest night.
The Phthian mountains saw,
And quaked with mystic awe:
The proud Sultana of the Straits bowed down
Her jewelled neck and her embattled crown.
The miscreants, as they raised their eyes
Glaring defiance on Thy skies,

Saw adverse winds and clouds display
The terrors of their black array;—
Saw each portentous star
Whose fiery aspect turned of yore to flight
The iron chariots of the Canaanite
Gird its bright harness for a deadlier war.

Beneath Thy withering look
Their limbs with palsy shook;
Scattered on earth the crescent banners lay;
Trembled with panic fear
Sabre and targe and spear,
Through the proud armies of the rising day.
Faint was each heart, unnerved each hand;
And, if they strove to charge or stand
Their efforts were as vain
As his who, scared in feverish sleep
By evil dreams, essays to leap,
Then backward falls again.
With a crash of wild dismay,
Their ten thousand ranks gave way;
Fast they broke, and fast they fled;
Trampled, mangled, dying, dead,
Horse and horsemen mingled lay;
Till the mountains of the slain
Raised the valleys to the plain.
Be all the glory to Thy name divine!
The swords were our's; the arm, O Lord, was Thine.
Therefore to Thee, beneath whose footstool wait
The powers which erring man calls Chance and Fate,
To Thee who hast laid low
The pride of Europe's foe,
And taught Byzantium's sullen lords to fear,
I pour my spirit out
In a triumphant shout,
And call all ages and all lands to hear.
Thou who evermore endurest,
Loftiest, mightiest, wisest, purest,
Thou whose will destroys or saves,
Dread of tyrants, hope of slaves,
The wreath of glory is from Thee,
And the red sword of victory.

There where exulting Danube's flood
Runs stained with Islam's noblest blood
From that tremendous field,
There where in mosque the tyrants met,
And from the crier's minaret
Unholy summons pealed,
Pure shrines and temples now shall be
Decked for a worship worthy Thee.
To Thee thy whole creation pays
With mystic sympathy its praise,
The air, the earth, the seas:
The day shines forth with livelier beam;

There is a smile upon the stream,
An anthem on the breeze.
Glory, they cry, to Him whose might
Hath turned the barbarous foe to flight,
Whose arm protects with power divine
The city of his favoured line.
The caves, the woods, the rocks, repeat the sound ;
The everlasting hills roll the long echoes round.

But, if Thy rescued church may dare
Still to besiege Thy throne with prayer,
Sheathe not, we implore Thee, Lord,
Sheathe not Thy victorious sword.
Still Panonia pines away,
Vassal of a double sway :
Still Thy servants groan in chains,
Still the race which hates Thee reigns :
Part the living from the dead :
Join the members to the head :
Snatch Thine own sheep from yon fell monster's hold ;
Let one kind shepherd rule one undivided fold.

He is the victor, only he
Who reaps the fruits of victory.
We conquered once in vain,
When foamed the Ionian waves with gore,
And heaped Lepanto's stormy shore
With wrecks and Moslem slain.
Yet wretched Cyprus never broke
The Syrian tyrant's iron yoke.
Shall the twice vanquished foe
Again repeat his blow ?
Shall Europe's sword be hung to rust in peace ?
No—let the red-cross ranks
Of the triumphant Franks
Bear swift deliverance to the shrines of Greece
And in her inmost heart let Asia feel
The avenging plagues of Western fire and steel.

Oh God ! for one short moment raise
The veil which hides those glorious days.
The flying foes I see Thee urge
Even to the river's headlong verge.

Close on their rear the loud uproar
Of fierce pursuit from Ister's shore
Comes pealing on the wind ;
The Rab's wild waters are before,
The Christian sword behind.
Sons of perdition, speed your flight,
No earthly spear is in the rest ;
No earthly champion leads to fight
The warriors of the West.
The Lord of Hosts asserts His old renown,
Scatters, and smites, and slays, and tramples down.

Fast, fast beyond what mortal tongue can say,
  Or mortal fancy dream,
He rushes on his prey:
  Till, with the terrors of the wondrous theme
Bewildered and appalled, I cease to sing,
And close my dazzled eye, and rest my wearied wing.

THE LAST BUCCANEER.

(1839.)

THE winds were yelling, the waves were swelling,
  The sky was black and drear,
When the crew with eyes of flame brought the ship without a name
  Alongside the last Buccaneer.

"Whence flies your sloop full sail before so fierce a gale,
  When all others drive bare on the seas?
Say, come ye from the shore of the holy Salvador,
  Or the gulf of the rich Caribbees?"

"From a shore no search hath found, from a gulf no line can sound,
  Without rudder or needle we steer;
Above, below, our bark, dies the sea-fowl and the shark,
  As we fly by the last Buccaneer.

"To-night there shall be heard on the rocks of Cape de Verde,
  A loud crash, and a louder roar;
And to-morrow shall the deep, with a heavy moaning, sweep
  The corpses and wreck to the shore."

The stately ship of Clyde securely now may ride,
  In the breath of the citron shades;
And Severn's towering mast securely now flies fast,
  Through the sea of the balmy Trades.

From St Jago's wealthy port, from Havannah's royal fort,
  The seaman goes forth without fear;
For since that stormy night not a mortal hath had sight
  Of the flag of the last Buccaneer.

EPITAPH ON A JACOBITE.

(1845.)

To my true king I offered free from stain
Courage and faith; vain faith, and courage vain.
For him, I threw lands, honours, wealth, away,
And one dear hope, that was more prized than they.

For him I languished in a foreign clime,
Grey-haired with sorrow in my manhood's prime;
Heard on Lavernia Scargill's whispering trees,
And pined by Arno for my lovelier Tees;
Beheld each night my home in fevered sleep,
Each morning started from the dream to weep;
Till God who saw me tried too sorely, gave
The resting place I asked, an early grave.
Oh thou, whom chance leads to this nameless stone,
From that proud country which was once mine own,
By those white cliffs I never more must see,
By that dear language which I spake like thee,
Forget all feuds, and shed one English tear
O'er English dust. A broken heart lies here.

LINES WRITTEN IN AUGUST.

(1847.)

The day of tumult, strife, defeat, was o'er;
 Worn out with toil, and noise, and scorn, and spleen,
I slumbered, and in slumber saw once more
 A room in an old mansion, long unseen.

That room, methought, was curtained from the light;
 Yet through the curtains shone the moon's cold ray
Full on a cradle, where, in linen white,
 Sleeping life's first soft sleep, an infant lay.

Pale flickered on the hearth the dying flame,
 And all was silent in that ancient hall,
Save when by fits on the low night-wind came
 The murmur of the distant waterfall.

And lo! the fairy queens who rule our birth
 Drew nigh to speak the new-born baby's doom:
With noiseless step, which left no trace on earth,
 From gloom they came, and vanished into gloom.

Not deigning on the boy a glance to cast
 Swept careless by the gorgeous Queen of Gain;
More scornful still, the Queen of Fashion passed,
 With mincing gait and sneer of cold disdain.

The Queen of Power tossed high her jewelled head,
 And o'er her shoulder threw a wrathful frown;
The Queen of Pleasure on the pillow shed
 Scarce one stray rose-leaf from her fragrant crown.

Still Fay in long procession followed Fay;
 And still the little couch remained unblest:
But, when those wayward sprites had passed away,
 Came One, the last, the mightiest, and the best.

Oh glorious lady, with the eyes of light
  And laurels clustering round thy lofty brow,
Who by the cradle's side didst watch that night,
  Warbling a sweet, strange music, who wast thou?

" Yes, darling; let them go;" so ran the strain:
  " Yes; let them go, gain, fashion, pleasure, power,
And all the busy elves to whose domain
  Belongs the nether sphere, the fleeting hour.

" Without one envious sigh, one anxious scheme,
  The nether sphere, the fleeting hour resign.
Mine is the world of thought, the world of dream,
  Mine all the past, and all the future mine.

" Fortune, that lays in sport the mighty low,
  Age, that to penance turns the joys of youth,
Shall leave untouched the gifts which I bestow,
  The sense of beauty and the thirst of truth.

" Of the fair brotherhood who share my grace,
  I, from thy natal day, pronounce thee free;
And, if for some I keep a nobler place,
  I keep for none a happier than for thee.

" There are who, while to vulgar eyes they seem
  Of all my bounties largely to partake,
Of me as of some rival's handmaid deem,
  And court me but for gain's, power's, fashion's sake.

" To such, though deep their lore, though wide their fame,
  Shall my great mysteries be all unknown:
But thou, through good and evil, praise and blame,
  Wilt not thou love me for myself alone?

" Yes; thou wilt love me with exceeding love;
  And I will tenfold all that love repay,
Still smiling, though the tender may reprove,
  Still faithful, though the trusted may betray.

" For aye mine emblem was, and aye shall be,
  The ever-during plant whose bough I wear,
Brightest and greenest then, when every tree
  That blossoms in the light of Time is bare.

" In the dark hour of shame, I deigned to stand
  Before the frowning peers at Bacon's side:
On a far shore I smoothed with tender hand,
  Through months of pain, the sleepless bed of Hyde:

" I brought the wise and brave of ancient days
  To cheer the cell where Raleigh pined alone:
I lighted Milton's darkness with the blaze
  Of the bright ranks that guard the eternal throne.

"And even so, my child, it is my pleasure
That thou not then alone shouldst feel me nigh,
When, in domestic bliss and studious leisure,
Thy weeks uncounted come, uncounted fly;

"Not then alone, when myriads, closely pressed
Around thy car, the shout of triumph raise;
Nor when, in gilded drawing rooms, thy breast
Swells at the sweeter sound of woman's praise.

"No: when on restless night dawns cheerless morrow,
When weary soul and wasting body pine,
Thine am I still, in danger, sickness, sorrow,
In conflict, obloquy, want, exile, thine;

"Thine, where on mountain waves the snowbirds scream,
Where more than Thule's winter barbs the breeze,
Where scarce, through lowering clouds, one sickly gleam
Lights the drear May-day of Antarctic seas;

"Thine, when around thy litter's track all day
White sandhills shall reflect the blinding glare;
Thine, when, through forests breathing death, thy way
All night shall wind by many a tiger's lair;

"Thine most, when friends turn pale, when traitors fly,
When, hard beset, thy spirit, justly proud,
For truth, peace, freedom, mercy, dares defy
A sullen priesthood and a raving crowd.

"Amidst the din of all things fell and vile,
Hate's yell, and envy's hiss, and folly's bray,
Remember me; and with an unforced smile
See riches, baubles, flatterers, pass away.

"Yes: they will pass away; nor deem it strange:
They come and go, as comes and goes the sea:
And let them come and go: thou, through all change,
Fix thy firm gaze on virtue and on me."

TRANSLATION FROM PLAUTUS.

(1850.)

[The author passed a part of the summer and autumn of 1850 at Ventnor, in the Isle of Wight. He usually, when walking alone, had with him a book. On one occasion, as he was loitering in the landslip near Bonchurch, reading the Rudens of Plautus, it struck him that it might be an interesting experiment to attempt to produce something which might be supposed to resemble passages in the lost Greek drama of Diphilus, from which the Rudens appears to have been taken. He selected one passage in the Rudens, of which he then made the following version, which he afterwards copied out at the request of a friend to whom he had repeated it.]

Act. IV. Sc. vii.

Dæmones.

O Gripe, Gripe, in ætate hominum plurimæ
Fiunt transennæ, ubi decipiuntur dolis;

Atque edepol in eas plerumque esca imponitur.
Quam si quis avidus pascit escam avariter,
Decipitur in transenna avaritia sua.
Ille, qui consulte, docte, atque astute cavet,
Diutine uti bene licet partum bene.
Mi istæc videtur præda prædatum irier :
Ut cum majore dote abeat, quam advenerit.
Egone ut, quod ad me adlatum esse alienum sciam,
Celem ? Minime istuc faciet noster Dæmones.
Semper cavere hoc sapientes æquissimum est,
Ne conscii sint ipsi maleficiis suis.
Ego, mihi quum lusi, nil moror ullum lucrum.

GRIPUS.

Spectavi ego pridem Comicos ad istum modum
Sapienter dicta dicere, atque iis plaudier,
Quum illos sapientis mores monstrabant poplo ;
Sed quum inde suam quisque ibant diversi domum,
Nullus erat illo pacto, ut illi jusserant.

ΔΑΙΜ.

*Ὦ Γρῖπε, Γρῖπε, πλεῖστα παγίδων σχήματα
ἴδοι τις ἂν πεπηγμέν᾽ ἐν θνητῶν βίῳ,
καὶ πλεῖστ᾽ ἐπ αὐτοῖς δελέαθ᾽, ὧν ἐπιθυμίᾳ
ὀρεγόμενός τις ἐν κακοῖς ἁλίσκεται·
ὅστις δ᾽ ἀπιστεῖ καὶ σοφῶς φυλάττεται
καλῶς ἀπολαύει τῶν καλῶς πεπορισμένων.
ἅρπαγμα δ᾽ οὐχ ἅρπαγμ᾽ ὁ λάρναξ οὑτοσὶ,
ἀλλ᾽ αὐτὸς, οἶμαι, μᾶλλον ἁρπάξει τινά.
τόνδ᾽ ἄνδρα κλέπτειν τἀλλότρι᾽—εὐφήμει, τάλαν·
ταυτήν γε μὴ μαίνοιτο μανίαν Δαιμονῆς.
τόδε γὰρ ἀεὶ σοφοῖσιν εὐλαβητέον,
μή τί ποθ᾽ ἑαυτῷ τις ἀδίκημα συννοῇ·
κέρδη δ᾽ ἔμοιγε πάνθ᾽ ὅσοις εὐφραίνομαι,
κέρδος δ᾽ ἀκερδὲς ὃ τοὐμὸν ἀλγύνει κέαρ.

ΓΡΙΠ.

κἀγὼ μὲν ἤδη κωμικῶν ἀκήκοα
σεμνῶς λεγόντων τοιάδε, τοὺς δὲ θεωμένους
κροτεῖν, ματαίοις ἡδομένους σοφίσμασιν·
εἶθ᾽, ὡς ἀπῆλθ᾽ ἕκαστος οἴκαδ᾽, οὐδενὶ
οὐδὲν παρέμεινε τῶν καλῶς εἰρημένων.

PARAPHRASE OF A PASSAGE IN THE CHRONICLE OF THE MONK OF ST GALL.

[In the summer of 1856, the author travelled with a friend through Lombardy. As they were on the road between Novara and Milan, they were conversing on the subject of the legends relating to that country. The author remarked to his companion that Mr Panizzi, in the Essay on the Romantic Narrative Poetry of the Italians, prefixed to his edition of Bojardo, had pointed out an instance of the conversion of ballad poetry into prose narrative which strongly confirmed the theory of Perizonius and

Niebuhr, upon which "The Lays of Ancient Rome" are founded; and, after repeating an extract which Mr Panizzi has given from the chronicle of "The Monk of St Gall," he proceeded to frame a metrical paraphrase. The note in Mr Panizzi's work (vol. i. p. 123, note *b*) is here copied verbatim.]

"The monk says that Oger was with Desiderius, King of Lombardy, watching the advance of Charlemagne's army. The king often asked Oger where was Charlemagne. Quando videris, inquit, segetem campis inhorrescere, ferreum Padum et Ticinum marinis fluctibus ferro nigrantibus muros civitatis inundantes, tunc est spes Caroli venientis. His nedum expletis primum ad occasum Circino vel Borea cœpit apparere, quasi nubes tenebrosa, quæ diem clarissimam horrentes convertit in umbras. Sed propiante Imperatore, ex armorum splendore, dies omni nocte tenebrosior oborta est inclusis. Tunc visus est ipse ferreus Carolus ferrea galea cristatus, ferreis manicis armillatus, &c. &c. His igitur, quæ ego balbus et edentulus, non ut debui circuitu tardiore diutius explicare tentavi, veridicus speculator Oggerus celerrimo visu contuitus dixit ad Desiderium: Ecce, habes quem tantopere perquisisti. Et hæc dicens, pene exanimis cecidit.—MONACH. SANGAL. *de Reb. Bel. Caroli Magni.* lib. ii. § xxvi. Is this not evidently taken from poetical effusions?"

PARAPHRASE.

To Oggier spake King Didier:
"When cometh Charlemagne?
We looked for him in harvest:
We looked for him in rain.
Crops are reaped; and floods are past;
And still he is not here.
Some token show, that we may know
That Charlemagne is near."

Then to the King made answer
Oggier, the christened Dane:
"When stands the iron harvest,
Ripe on the Lombard plain,
That stiff harvest which is reaped
With sword of knight and peer,
Then by that sign ye may divine
That Charlemagne is near.

"When round the Lombard cities
The iron flood shall flow,
A swifter flood than Ticin,
A broader flood than Po,
Frothing white with many a plume,
Dark blue with many a spear,
Then by that sign ye may divine
That Charlemagne is near."

INSCRIPTION ON THE STATUE OF LORD WILLIAM BENTINCK.

AT CALCUTTA. (1835.)

To
WILLIAM CAVENDISH BENTINCK,
Who, during seven years, ruled India with eminent
Prudence, Integrity, and Benevolence;

Who, placed at the head of a great
Empire, never laid aside
The simplicity and moderation of a private citizen :
Who infused into Oriental despotism the spirit of British Freedom :
Who never forgot that the end of Government is
The happiness of the Governed :
Who abolished cruel rites :
Who effaced humiliating distinctions :
Who gave liberty to the expression of public opinion :
Whose constant study it was, to elevate the intellectual
And moral character of
The Nations committed to his charge :
This Monument
Was erected by men,
Who, differing in Race, in
Manners, in Language, and in Religion,
Cherish, with equal veneration and gratitude,
The memory of his wise, upright, and Paternal Administration.

EPITAPH ON SIR BENJAMIN HEATH MALKIN.

At Calcutta. (1837.)

This monument
Is sacred to the memory
of
Sir Benjamin Heath Malkin, Knight,
One of the Judges of
The Supreme Court of Judicature :
A man eminently distinguished
By his literary and scientific attainments,
By his professional learning and ability,
By the clearness and accuracy of his intellect,
By diligence, by patience, by firmness, by love of truth,
By public spirit, ardent and disinterested,
Yet always under the guidance of discretion,
By rigid uprightness, by unostentatious piety,
By the serenity of his temper,
And by the benevolence of his heart.

He was born on the 29th September 1797.
He died on the 21st October 1837.

EPITAPH ON LORD METCALFE.

(1847.)

Near this stone is laid
Charles, Lord Metcalfe,
A Statesman tried in many high offices,
And difficult conjunctures,
And found equal to all.
The three greatest Dependencies of the British Crown
Were successively entrusted to his care.
In India, his fortitude, his wisdom,
His probity, and his moderation,
Are held in honourable remembrance
By men of many races, languages, and religions.
In Jamaica, still convulsed by a social revolution,
His prudence calmed the evil passions
Which long suffering had engendered in one class
And long domination in another.
In Canada, not yet recovered from the calamities of civil war,
He reconciled contending factions to each other,
And to the Mother Country.
Costly monuments in Asiatic and American cities
Attest the gratitude of the nations which he ruled.
This tablet records the sorrow and the pride
With which his memory is cherished by his family.

LORD MACAULAY'S
SPEECHES.

TO

HENRY

MARQUESS OF LANSDOWNE

THESE SPEECHES ARE DEDICATED

BY HIS GRATEFUL AND AFFECTIONATE FRIEND

THOMAS BABINGTON MACAULAY.

PREFACE.

It was most reluctantly that I determined to suspend, during the last autumn, a work which is the business and the pleasure of my life, in order to prepare these Speeches for publication; and it is most reluctantly that I now give them to the world. Even if I estimated their oratorical merit much more highly than I do, I should not willingly have revived, in the quiet times in which we are so happy as to live, the memory of those fierce contentions in which too many years of my public life were passed. Many expressions which, when society was convulsed by political dissensions, and when the foundations of government were shaking, were heard by an excited audience with sympathy and applause, may, now that the passions of all parties have subsided, be thought intemperate and acrimonious. It was especially painful to me to find myself under the necessity of recalling to my own recollection, and to the recollection of others, the keen encounters which took place between the late Sir Robert Peel and myself. Some parts of the conduct of that eminent man I must always think deserving of serious blame. But, on a calm review of his long and chequered public life, I acknowledge, with sincere pleasure, that his faults were much more than redeemed by great virtues, great sacrifices, and great services. My political hostility to him was never in the smallest degree tainted by personal ill-will. After his fall from power a cordial reconciliation took place between us: I admired the wisdom, the moderation, the disinterested patriotism, which he invariably showed during the last and best years of his life; I lamented his untimely death, as both a private and a public calamity; and I earnestly wished that the sharp words which had sometimes been exchanged between us might be forgotten.

Unhappily an act, for which the law affords no redress, but which I have no hesitation in pronouncing to be a gross injury to me and a gross fraud on the public, has compelled me to do what I should never have done willingly. A bookseller, named Vizetelly, who seems to aspire to that sort of distinction which Curll enjoyed a hundred and twenty years ago, thought fit, without asking my consent, without even giving me any notice, to announce an edition of my Speeches, and was not ashamed to tell the world in his advertisement that he published them by special license. When the book appeared, I found that it contained fifty-six speeches, said to have been delivered by me in the House of Commons. Of these speeches a few were reprinted from reports which I had corrected for the Mirror of Parliament or the Parliamentary Debates, and were therefore, with the exception of some errors of the pen and the press, correctly given. The rest bear scarcely the faintest resemblance to the speeches which I really made. The substance of what I said is perpetually misrepresented. The connection of the arguments is altogether lost. Extravagant blunders are put into my mouth in almost every page. An editor who was not grossly ignorant would have perceived that no person to whom the House of Commons would listen could possibly have been guilty of such blunders. An editor who had the smallest regard for truth, or for the fame of the person whose speeches he had undertaken to publish, would have had recourse to the various sources of information which were readily accessible, and, by collating them, would have produced a book which would at least have contained no absolute nonsense. But I have unfortunately had an editor whose only object was to make a few pounds, and who was willing to sacrifice to that object my reputation and his own. He took the very worst report extant, compared it with no other report, removed no blemish however obvious or however ludicrous, gave to the world some hundreds of pages utterly contemptible both in matter and manner, and prefixed my name to them. The least that he should have done was to consult the files of The Times newspaper. I have frequently done so, when I have noticed in his book any passage more than ordinarily absurd; and I have almost invariably found that in The Times newspaper, my meaning had been correctly reported, though often in words different from those which I had used.

I could fill a volume with instances of the injustice with which I have been treated. But I will confine myself to a single speech, the speech on the Dissenters' Chapels Bill. I have selected that speech, not because Mr Vizetelly's version of that speech is worse than his versions of thirty or forty other speeches, but because I have before me a report of that speech which an honest and diligent editor would have thought it his first duty to consult. The report of which I speak was published by the Unitarian Dissenters, who were naturally desirous that there should be an accurate record of what had passed in a debate deeply interesting to them. It was not corrected by me: but it generally, though not uniformly, exhibits with fidelity the substance of what I said.

Mr Vizetelly makes me say that the principle of our Statutes of Limitation was to be found in the legislation of the Mexicans and Peruvians. That is a matter about which, as I know nothing, I certainly said nothing. Neither in The Times nor in the Unitarian report is there anything about Mexico or Peru.

Mr Vizetelly next makes me say that the principle of limitation is found "amongst the Pandects of the Benares." Did my editor believe that I uttered these words, and that the House of Commons listened patiently to them? If he did, what must be thought of his understanding? If he did not, was it the part of an honest man to publish such gibberish as mine? The most charitable supposition, which I therefore gladly adopt, is that Mr Vizetelly saw nothing absurd in the expression which he has attributed to me. The Benares he probably supposes to be some Oriental nation. What he supposes their Pandects to be I shall not presume to guess. If he had examined The Times, he would have found no trace of the passage. The reporter, probably, did not catch what I said, and, being more veracious than Mr Vizetelly, did not choose to ascribe to me what I did not say. If Mr Vizetelly had consulted the Unitarian report, he would have seen that I spoke of the Pundits of Benares ; and he might, without any very long or costly research, have learned where Benares is, and what a Pundit is.

Mr Vizetelly then represents me as giving the House of Commons some very extraordinary information about both the Calvinistic and the Arminian Methodists. He makes me say that Whitfield held and taught that the connection between Church and State was sinful. Whitfield never held or taught any such thing ; nor was I so grossly ignorant of the life and character of that remarkable man as to impute to him a doctrine which he would have abhorred. Here again, both in The Times and in the Unitarian report, the substance of what I said is correctly given.

Mr Vizetelly proceeds to put into my mouth a curious account of the polity of the Wesleyan Methodists. He makes me say that, after John Wesley's death, "the feeling in favour of the lay administration of the Sacrament became very strong and very general : a Conference was applied for, was constituted, and, after some discussion, it was determined that the request should be granted." Such folly could have been uttered only by a person profoundly ignorant of the history of Methodism. Certainly nothing of the sort was ever uttered by me ; and nothing of the sort will be found either in The Times or in the Unitarian report.

Mr Vizetelly makes me say that the Great Charter recognises the principle of limitation, a thing which everybody who has read the Great Charter knows not to be true. He makes me give an utterly false history of Lord Nottingham's Occasional Conformity Bill. But I will not weary my readers by proceeding further.

These samples will probably be thought sufficient. They all lie within a compass of seven or eight pages. It will be observed that all the faults which I have pointed out are grave faults of substance. Slighter faults of substance are numerous. As to faults of syntax and of style, hardly one sentence in a hundred is free from them.

I cannot permit myself to be exhibited, in this ridiculous and degrading manner, for the profit of an unprincipled man. I therefore unwillingly, and in mere self-defence, give this volume to the public. I have selected, to the best of my judgment, from among my speeches, those which are the least unworthy to be preserved. Nine of them were corrected by me while they were still fresh in my memory, and appear almost word for word as they were spoken. They are the speech of the second of March 1831, the speech of the twentieth of September 1831, the speech of the tenth of October 1831, the speech of the sixteenth of December 1831, the speech on the Anatomy Bill, the speech on the India Bill, the speech on Serjeant Talfourd's Copyright Bill, the speech on the Sugar Duties, and the speech on the Irish Church. The substance of the remaining speeches I have given with perfect ingenuousness. I have not made alterations for the purpose of saving my own reputation either for consistency or for foresight. I have not softened down the strong terms in which I formerly expressed opinions which time and thought may have modified; nor have I retouched my predictions in order to make them correspond with subsequent events. Had I represented myself as speaking in 1831, in 1840, or in 1845, as I should speak in 1853, I should have deprived my book of its chief value. This volume is now at least a strictly honest record of opinions and reasonings which were heard with favour by a large part of the Commons of England at some important conjunctures; and such a record, however low it may stand in the estimation of the literary critic, cannot but be of use to the historian.

I do not pretend to give with accuracy the diction of those speeches which I did not myself correct within a week after they were delivered. Many expressions, and a few paragraphs, linger in my memory. But the rest, including much that had been carefully premeditated, is irrecoverably lost. Nor have I, in this part of my task, derived much assistance from any report. My delivery is, I believe, too rapid. Very able shorthand writers have sometimes complained that they could not follow me, and have contented themselves with setting down the substance of what I said. As I am unable to recall the precise words which I used, I have done my best to put my meaning into words which I might have used.

I have only, in conclusion, to beg that the readers of this Preface will pardon an egotism which a great wrong has made necessary, and which is quite as disagreeable to myself as it can be to them.

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A SPEECH

Delivered in the House of Commons on the 2d of March, 1831.

On Tuesday, the first of March, 1831, Lord John Russell moved the House of Commons for leave to bring in a bill to amend the representation of the people in England and Wales. The discussion occupied seven nights. At length, on the morning of Thursday, the tenth of March, the motion was carried without a division. The following speech was made on the second night of the debate.

It is a circumstance, Sir, of happy augury for the motion before the House, that almost all those who have opposed it have declared themselves hostile on principle to Parliamentary Reform. Two Members, I think, have confessed that, though they disapprove of the plan now submitted to us, they are forced to admit the necessity of a change in the Representative system. Yet even those gentlemen have used, as far as I have observed, no arguments which would not apply as strongly to the most moderate change as to that which has been proposed by His Majesty's Government. I say, Sir, that I consider this as a circumstance of happy augury. For what I feared was, not the opposition of those who are averse to all Reform, but the disunion of reformers. I knew that, during three months, every reformer had been employed in conjecturing what the plan of the Government would be. I knew that every reformer had imagined in his own mind a scheme differing doubtless in some points from that which my noble friend, the Paymaster of the Forces, has developed. I felt therefore great apprehension that one person would be dissatisfied with one part of the bill, that another person would be dissatisfied with another part, and that thus our whole strength would be wasted in internal dissensions. That apprehension is now at an end. I have seen with delight the perfect concord which prevails among all who deserve the name of reformers in this House; and I trust that I may consider it as an omen of the concord which will prevail among reformers throughout the country. I will not, Sir, at present express any opinion as to the details of the bill; but, having during the last twenty-four hours given the most diligent consideration to its general principles, I have no hesitation in pronouncing it a wise, noble, and comprehensive measure, skilfully framed for the healing of great distempers, for the securing at once of the public liberties, and of the public repose, and for the reconciling and knitting together of all the orders of the State.

The honourable Baronet who has just sat down,* has told us, that the Ministers have attempted to unite two inconsistent principles in one abortive measure. Those were his very words. He thinks, if I understand him rightly, that we ought either to leave the representative system such as it is, or to make it perfectly symmetrical. I think, Sir, that the Ministers would have acted unwisely if they had taken either course. Their principle is plain, rational, and consistent. It is this, to admit the middle class to a large and direct share in the representation, without any violent shock to the institutions of our country. I understand those cheers: but surely the gentlemen who utter them will allow that the change which will be made in our institutions by this bill is far less violent than that which, according to the honourable Baronet, ought to be made if we make any Reform at all. I praise the Ministers for not attempting, at the present time, to make the representation uniform. I praise them for not effacing the old distinction between the towns and the counties, and for not assigning Members to districts, according to the American practice, by the Rule of Three. The Government has, in my opinion, done all that was necessary for the removing of a great practical evil, and no more than was necessary.

I consider this, Sir, as a practical question. I rest my opinion on no general theory of government. I distrust all general theories of government. I will not positively say, that there is any form of polity which may not, in some conceivable circumstances, be the best possible. I believe that there are societies in which every man may safely be admitted to vote. Gentlemen may cheer, but such is my opinion. I say, Sir, that there are countries in which the condition of the labouring classes is such that they may safely be intrusted with the right of electing Members of the Legislature. If the labourers of England were in that state in which I, from my soul, wish to see them, if employment were always plentiful, wages always high, food always cheap, if a large family were considered not as an encumbrance but as a blessing, the principal objections to Universal Suffrage would, I think, be removed. Universal Suffrage exists in the United States, without producing any very frightful consequences; and I do not believe that the people of those States, or of any part of the world, are in any good quality naturally superior to our own countrymen. But, unhappily, the labouring classes in England, and in all old countries, are occasionally in a state of great distress. Some of the causes of this distress are, I fear, beyond the control of the Government. We know what effect distress produces, even on people more intelligent than the great body of the labouring classes can possibly be. We know that it makes even wise men irritable, unreasonable, credulous, eager for immediate relief, heedless of remote consequences. There is no quackery in medicine, religion, or politics, which may not impose even on a powerful mind, when that mind has been disordered by pain or fear. It is therefore no reflection on the poorer class of Englishmen, who are not, and who cannot in the nature of things be, highly educated, to say that distress produces on them its natural effects, those effects which it would produce on the Americans, or on any other people, that it blinds their judgment, that it inflames their passions, that it makes them prone to believe those who flatter them, and to distrust those who would serve

* Sir John Walsh.

them. For the sake, therefore, of the whole society, for the sake of the labouring classes themselves, I hold it to be clearly expedient that, in a country like this, the right of suffrage should depend on a pecuniary qualification.

But, Sir, every argument which would induce me to oppose Universal Suffrage, induces me to support the plan which is now before us. I am opposed to Universal Suffrage, because I think that it would produce a destructive revolution. I support this plan, because I am sure that it is our best security against a revolution. The noble Paymaster of the Forces hinted, delicately indeed and remotely, at this subject. He spoke of the danger of disappointing the expectations of the nation; and for this he was charged with threatening the House. Sir, in the year 1817, the late Lord Londonderry proposed a suspension of the Habeas Corpus Act. On that occasion he told the House that, unless the measures which he recommended were adopted, the public peace could not be preserved. Was he accused of threatening the House? Again, in the year 1819, he proposed the laws known by the name of the Six Acts. He then told the House that, unless the executive power were reinforced, all the institutions of the country would be overturned by popular violence. Was he then accused of threatening the House? Will any gentleman say that it is parliamentary and decorous to urge the danger arising from popular discontent as an argument for severity; but that it is unparliamentary and indecorous to urge that same danger as an argument for conciliation? I, Sir, dŏ entertain great apprehension for the fate of my country. I do in my conscience believe that, unless the plan proposed, or some similar plan, be speedily adopted, great and terrible calamities will befall us. Entertaining this opinion, I think myself bound to state it, not as a threat, but as a reason. I support this bill because it will improve our institutions; but I support it also because it tends to preserve them. That we may exclude those whom it is necessary to exclude, we must admit those whom it may be safe to admit. At present we oppose the schemes of revolutionists with only one half, with only one quarter of our proper force. We say, and we say justly, that it is not by mere numbers, but by property and intelligence, that the nation ought to be governed. Yet, saying this, we exclude from all share in the government great masses of property and intelligence, great numbers of those who are most interested in preserving tranquillity, and who know best how to preserve it. We do more. We drive over to the side of revolution those whom we shut out from power. Is this a time when the cause of law and order can spare one of its natural allies?

My noble friend, the Paymaster of the Forces, happily described the effect which some parts of our representative system would produce on the mind of a foreigner, who had heard much of our freedom and greatness. If, Sir, I wished to make such a foreigner clearly understand what I consider as the great defects of our system, I would conduct him through that immense city which lies to the north of Great Russell Street and Oxford Street, a city superior in size and in population to the capitals of many mighty kingdoms; and probably superior in opulence, intelligence, and general respectability, to any city in the world. I would conduct him through that interminable succession of streets and squares, all consisting of well built and well furnished houses. I would make him observe the brilliancy of the shops, and the crowd of well-appointed equipages. I would show him that magnificent circle of palaces which surrounds the

Regent's Park. I would tell him that the rental of this district was far greater than that of the whole kingdom of Scotland, at the time of the Union. And then I would tell him that this was an unrepresented district. It is needless to give any more instances. It is needless to speak of Manchester, Birmingham, Leeds, Sheffield, with no representation, or of Edinburgh and Glasgow with a mock representation. If a property tax were now imposed on the principle that no person who had less than a hundred and fifty pounds a year should contribute, I should not be surprised to find that one half in number and value of the contributors had no votes at all; and it would, beyond all doubt, be found that one fiftieth part in number and value of the contributors had a larger share of the representation than the other forty-nine fiftieths. This is not government by property. It is government by certain detached portions and fragments of property, selected from the rest, and preferred to the rest, on no rational principle whatever.

To say that such a system is ancient, is no defence. My honourable friend, the Member for the University of Oxford,* challenges us to show that the Constitution was ever better than it is. Sir, we are legislators, not antiquaries. The question for us is, not whether the Constitution was better formerly, but whether we can make it better now. In fact, however, the system was not in ancient times by any means so absurd as it is in our age. One noble Lord† has to-night told us that the town of Aldborough, which he represents, was not larger in the time of Edward the First than it is at present. The line of its walls, he assures us, may still be traced. It is now built up to that line. He argues, therefore, that as the founders of our representative institutions gave members to Aldborough when it was as small as it now is, those who would disfranchise it on account of its smallness have no right to say that they are recurring to the original principle of our representative institutions. But does the noble Lord remember the change which has taken place in the country during the last five centuries? Does he remember how much England has grown in population, while Aldborough has been standing still? Does he consider, that in the time of Edward the First, the kingdom did not contain two millions of inhabitants? It now contains nearly fourteen millions. A hamlet of the present day would have been a town of some importance in the time of our early Parliaments. Aldborough may be absolutely as considerable a place as ever. But compared with the kingdom, it is much less considerable, by the noble Lord's own showing, than when it first elected burgesses. My honourable friend, the Member for the University of Oxford, has collected numerous instances of the tyranny which the kings and nobles anciently exercised, both over this House and over the electors. It is not strange that, in times when nothing was held sacred, the rights of the people, and of the representatives of the people, should not have been held sacred. The proceedings which my honourable friend has mentioned, no more prove that, by the ancient constitution of the realm, this House ought to be a tool of the king and of the aristocracy, than the Benevolences and the Shipmoney prove their own legality, or than those unjustifiable arrests which took place long after the ratification of the great Charter and even after the Petition of Right, prove that the subject was not anciently entitled to his personal liberty. We talk of the wisdom of our ancestors: and in one respect at least they were wiser than we. They legislated for their own times. They looked at the England which was before them. They did not think it necessary to give twice as many Members to York as they gave to London, because York had been the capital of Britain in the time of Constantius Chlorus; and they would have been amazed indeed if they had foreseen, that a city of more than a hundred thousand inhabitants would be left without Representatives in the nineteenth century, merely because it stood on ground which in the thirteenth century had been occupied by a few huts. They framed a representative system, which, though not without defects and irregularities, was well adapted to the state of England in their time. But a great revolution took place. The character of the old corporations changed. New forms of property came into existence. New portions of society rose into importance. There were in our rural districts rich cultivators, who were not freeholders. There were in our capital rich traders, who were not liverymen. Towns shrank into villages. Villages swelled into cities larger than the London of the Plantagenets. Unhappily while the natural growth of society went on, the artificial polity continued unchanged. The ancient form of the representation remained; and precisely because the form remained, the spirit departed. Then came that pressure almost to bursting, the new wine in the old bottles, the new society under the old institutions. It is now time for us to pay a decent, a rational, a manly reverence to our ancestors, not by superstitiously adhering to what they, in other circumstances, did, but by doing what they, in our circumstances, would have done. All history is full of revolutions, produced by causes similar to those which are now operating in England. A portion of the community which had been of no account expands and becomes strong. It demands a place in the system, suited, not to its former weakness, but to its present power. If this is granted, all is well. If this is refused, then comes the struggle between the young energy of one class and the ancient privileges of another. Such was the struggle between the Plebeians and the Patricians of Rome. Such was the struggle of the Italian allies for admission to the full rights of Roman citizens. Such was the struggle of our North American colonies against the mother country. Such was the struggle which the Third Estate of France maintained against the aristocracy of birth. Such was the struggle which the Roman Catholics of Ireland maintained against the aristocracy of creed. Such is the struggle which the free people of colour in Jamaica are now maintaining against the aristocracy of skin. Such, finally, is the struggle which the middle classes in England are maintaining against an aristocracy of mere locality, against an aristocracy the principle of which is to invest a hundred drunken potwallopers in one place, or the owner of a ruined hovel in another, with powers which are withheld from cities renowned to the furthest ends of the earth, for the marvels of their wealth and of their industry.

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* Sir Robert Harry Inglis. † Lord Stormont.

But these great cities, says my honourable friend the Member for the University of Oxford, are virtually, though not directly, represented. Are not the wishes of Manchester, he asks, as much consulted as those of any town which sends Members to Parliament? Now, Sir, I do not understand how a power which is salutary when exercised virtually can be noxious when exercised directly. If the wishes of Manchester have as much weight with us as they would have under a system which should give Representatives to Manchester, how can there be any danger in giving Representatives to Manchester? A virtual Representative is, I presume, a man who acts as a direct Representative would act: for surely it would be absurd to say that a man virtually represents the people of Manchester, who is in the habit of saying No, when a man directly representing the people of Manchester would say Ay. The utmost that can be expected from virtual Representation is that it may be as good as direct Representation. If so, why not grant direct Representation to places which, as everybody allows, ought, by some process or other, to be represented?

If it be said that there is an evil in change as change, I answer that there is also an evil in discontent as discontent. This, indeed, is the strongest part of our case. It is said that the system works well. I deny it. I deny that a system works well, which the people regard with aversion. We may say here, that it is a good system and a perfect system. But if any man were to say so to any six hundred and fifty-eight respectable farmers or shopkeepers, chosen by lot in any part of England, he would be hooted down, and laughed to scorn. Are these the feelings with which any part of the government ought to be regarded? Above all, are these the feelings with which the popular branch of the legislature ought to be regarded? It is almost as essential to the utility of a House of Commons, that it should possess the confidence of the people, as that it should deserve that confidence. Unfortunately, that which is in theory the popular part of our government, is in practice the unpopular part. Who wishes to dethrone the King? Who wishes to turn the Lords out of their House? Here and there a crazy radical, whom the boys in the street point at as he walks along. Who wishes to alter the constitution of this House? The whole people. It is natural that it should be so. The House of Commons is, in the language of Mr Burke, a check, not on the people, but for the people. While that check is efficient, there is no reason to fear that the King or the nobles will oppress the people. But if that check requires checking, how is it to be checked? If the salt shall lose its savour, wherewith shall we season it? The distrust with which the nation regards this House may be unjust. But what then? Can you remove that distrust? That it exists cannot be denied. That it is an evil cannot be denied. That it is an increasing evil cannot be denied. One gentleman tells us that it has been produced by the late events in France and Belgium; another, that it is the effect of seditious works which have lately been published. If this feeling be of origin so recent, I have read history to little purpose. Sir, this alarming discontent is not the growth of a day or of a year. If there be any symptoms by which it is possible to distinguish the chronic diseases of the body politic from its passing inflammations, all those symptoms exist in the present case. The taint has been gradually becoming more extensive and more malignant, through the whole lifetime of two generations. We have tried anodynes. We have tried cruel operations. What are we to try now? Who flatters himself that he can turn this feeling back? Does there remain any argument which escaped the comprehensive intellect of Mr Burke, or the subtlety of Mr Windham? Does there remain any species of coercion which was not tried by Mr Pitt and by Lord Londonderry? We have had laws. We have had blood. New treasons have been created. The Press has been shackled. The Habeas Corpus Act has been suspended. Public meetings have been prohibited. The event has proved that these expedients were mere palliatives. You are at the end of your palliatives. The evil remains. It is more formidable than ever. What is to be done?

Under such circumstances, a great plan of reconciliation, prepared by the Ministers of the Crown, has been brought before us in a manner which gives additional lustre to a noble name, inseparably associated during two centuries with the dearest liberties of the English people. I will not say, that this plan is in all its details precisely such as I might wish it to be; but it is founded on a great and a sound principle. It takes away a vast power from a few. It distributes that power through the great mass of the middle order. Every man, therefore, who thinks as I think is bound to stand firmly by Ministers who are resolved to stand or fall with this measure. Were I one of them, I would sooner, infinitely sooner, fall with such a measure than stand by any other means that ever supported a Cabinet.

My honourable friend, the Member for the University of Oxford, tells us, that if we pass this law, England will soon be a republic. The reformed House of Commons will, according to him, before it has sate ten years, depose the King, and expel the Lords from their House. Sir, if my honourable friend could prove this, he would have succeeded in bringing an argument for democracy, infinitely stronger than any that is to be found in the works of Paine. My honourable friend's proposition is in fact this: that our monarchical and aristocratical institutions have no hold on the public mind of England; that these institutions are regarded with aversion by a decided majority of the middle class. This, Sir, I say, is plainly deducible from his proposition; for he tells us that the Representatives of the middle class will inevitably abolish royalty and nobility within ten years: and there is surely no reason to think that the Representatives of the middle class will be more inclined to a democratic revolution than their constituents. Now, Sir, if I were convinced that the great body of the middle class in England look with aversion on monarchy and aristocracy, I should be forced, much against my will, to come to this conclusion, that monarchical and aristocratical institutions are unsuited to my country. Monarchy and aristocracy, valuable and useful as I think them, are still valuable and useful as means, and not as ends. The end of government is the happiness of the people: and I do not conceive that, in a country like this, the happiness of the people can be promoted by a form of government in which the middle classes place no confidence, and which exists only because the middle classes have no organ by which to make their sentiments known. But, Sir, I am fully convinced that the middle classes sincerely wish to uphold the Royal prerogatives and the constitutional rights of the Peers. What facts does my honourable friend produce in support of his opinion? One fact only; and that a fact which has absolutely nothing to do with the question. The effect of this Reform, he tells us, would be to make the House of Commons allpowerful. It was allpowerful once before, in the beginning of 1649. Then it cut off the head of the King, and abolished the House of Peers. Therefore, if it again has the supreme power, it will act in the same manner. Now, Sir, it was not the House of Commons that cut off the head of Charles the First; nor was the House of Commons then allpowerful. It had been greatly reduced in numbers by successive expulsions. It was under the absolute dominion of the army. A majority of the House was willing to take the terms offered by the King. The soldiers turned out the majority; and the minority, not a sixth part of the whole House, passed those votes of which my honourable friend speaks, votes of which the middle classes disapproved then, and of which they disapprove still.

My honourable friend, and almost all the gentlemen who have taken the same side with him in this Debate, have dwelt much on the utility of close and rotten boroughs. It is by means of such boroughs, they tell us, that the ablest men have been introduced into Parliament. It is true that many distinguished persons have represented places of this description. But, Sir, we must judge of a form of government by its general tendency, not by happy accidents. Every form of government has its happy accidents. Despotism has its happy accidents. Yet we are not disposed to abolish all constitutional checks, to place an absolute master over us, and to take our chance whether he may be a Caligula or a Marcus Aurelius. In whatever way the House of Commons may be chosen, some able men will be chosen in that way who would not be chosen in any other way. If there were a law that the hundred tallest men in England should be Members of Parliament, there would probably be some able men among those who would come into the House by virtue of this law. If the hundred persons whose names stand first in the alphabetical list of the Court Guide were made Members of Parliament, there would probably be able men among them. We read in ancient history, that a very able king was elected by the neighing of his horse; but we shall scarcely, I think, adopt this mode of election. In one of the most celebrated republics of antiquity, Athens, Senators and Magistrates were chosen by lot; and sometimes the lot fell fortunately. Once, for example, Socrates was in office. A cruel and unjust proposition was made by a demagogue. Socrates resisted it at the hazard of his own life. There is no event in Grecian history more interesting than that memorable resistance. Yet who would have officers appointed by lot, because the accident of the lot may have given to a great and good man a power which he would probably never have attained in any other way? We must judge, as I said, by the general tendency of a system. No person can doubt that a House of Commons chosen freely by the middle classes, will contain many very able men. I do not say, that precisely the same able men who would find their way into the present House of Commons will find their way into the reformed House: but that is not the question. No particular man is necessary to the State. We may depend on it that, if we provide the country with popular institutions, those institutions will provide it with great men.

There is another objection, which, I think, was first raised by the honourable and learned Member for Newport.* He tells us that the elective franchise is property; that to take it away from a man who has not been judicially convicted of malpractices is robbery; that no crime is proved against the voters in the close boroughs; that no crime is even imputed to them in the preamble of the bill; and that therefore to disfranchise them without compensation would be an act of revolutionary tyranny. The honourable and learned gentleman has compared the conduct of the present Ministers to that of those odious tools of power, who, towards the close of the reign of Charles the Second, seized the charters of the Whig Corporations. Now, there was another precedent, which I wonder that he did not recollect, both because it is much more nearly in point than that to which he referred, and because my noble friend, the Paymaster of the Forces, had previously alluded to it. If the elective franchise is property, if to disfranchise voters without a crime proved, or a compensation given, be robbery, was there ever such an act of robbery as the disfranchising of the Irish forty-shilling freeholders? Was any pecuniary compensation given to them? Is it declared in the preamble of the bill which took away their franchise, that they had been convicted of any offence? Was any judicial inquiry instituted into their conduct?

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* Mr Horace Twiss.

Were they even accused of any crime? Or if you say that it was a crime in the electors of Clare to vote for the honourable and learned gentleman who now represents the county of Waterford, was a Protestant freeholder in Louth to be punished for the crime of a Catholic freeholder in Clare? If the principle of the honourable and learned Member for Newport be sound, the franchise of the Irish peasant was property. That franchise the Ministers under whom the honourable and learned Member held office did not scruple to take away. Will he accuse those Ministers of robbery? If not, how can he bring such an accusation against their successors?

Every gentleman, I think, who has spoken from the other side of the House, has alluded to the opinions which some of His Majesty's Ministers formerly entertained on the subject of Reform. It would be officious in me, Sir, to undertake the defence of gentlemen who are so well able to defend themselves. I will only say that, in my opinion, the country will not think worse either of their capacity or of their patriotism, because they have shown that they can profit by experience, because they have learned to see the folly of delaying inevitable changes. There are others who ought to have learned the same lesson. I say, Sir, that there are those who, I should have thought, must have had enough to last them all their lives of that humiliation which follows obstinate and boastful resistance to changes rendered necessary by the progress of society, and by the development of the human mind. Is it possible that those persons can wish again to occupy a position which can neither be defended nor surrendered with honour? I well remember, Sir, a certain evening in the month of May, 1827. I had not then the honour of a seat in this House; but I was an attentive observer of its proceedings. The right honourable Baronet opposite,* of whom personally I desire to speak with that high respect which I feel for his talents and his character, but of whose public conduct I must speak with the sincerity required by my public duty, was then, as he is now, out of office. He had just resigned the seals of the Home Department, because he conceived that the recent ministerial arrangements had been too favourable to the Catholic claims. He rose to ask whether it was the intention of the new Cabinet to repeal the Test and Corporation Acts, and to reform the Parliament. He bound up, I well remember, those two questions together; and he declared that, if the Ministers should either attempt to repeal the Test and Corporation Acts, or bring forward a measure of Parliamentary Reform, he should think it his duty to oppose them to the utmost. Since that declaration was made four years have elapsed; and what is now the state of the three questions which then chiefly agitated the minds of men? What is become of the Test and Corporation Acts? They are repealed. By whom? By the right honourable Baronet. What has become of the Catholic disabilities? They are removed. By whom? By the right honourable Baronet. The question of Parliamentary Reform is still behind. But signs, of which it is impossible to misconceive the import, do most clearly indicate that unless that question also be speedily settled, property, and order, and all the institutions of this great monarchy, will be exposed to fearful peril. Is it possible that gentlemen long versed in high political affairs cannot read these signs? Is it possible that they can really believe that the Representative system of England, such as it now is, will last to the year 1860? If not, for what would they have us wait? Would they have us wait merely that we may show to all the world how little we have profited by our own recent experience? Would they have us wait, that we may once again hit the exact point where we can neither refuse with authority, nor concede with grace? Would they have us wait, that the numbers of the discontented party may become larger, its demands higher, its feelings more acrimonious, its organisation more complete? Would they have us wait till the whole tragicomedy of 1827 has been acted over again? till they have been brought into office by a cry of 'No Reform,' to be reformers, as they were once before brought into office by a cry of 'No Popery,' to be emancipators? Have they obliterated from their minds—gladly, perhaps, would some among them obliterate from their minds—the transactions of that year? And have they forgotten all the transactions of the succeeding year? Have they forgotten how the spirit of liberty in Ireland, debarred from its natural outlet, found a vent by forbidden passages? Have they forgotten how we were forced to indulge the Catholics in all the license of rebels, merely because we chose to withhold from them the liberties of subjects? Do they wait for associations more formidable than that of the Corn Exchange, for contributions larger than the Rent, for agitators more violent than those who, three years ago, divided with the King and the Parliament the sovereignty of Ireland? Do they wait for that last and most dreadful paroxysm of popular rage, for that last and most cruel test of military fidelity? Let them wait, if their past experience shall induce them to think that any high honour or any exquisite pleasure is to be obtained by a policy like this. Let them wait, if this strange and fearful infatuation be indeed upon them, that they should not see with their eyes, or hear with their ears, or understand with their heart. But let us know our interest and our duty better. Turn where we may, within, around, the voice of great events is proclaiming to us, Reform, that you may preserve. Now, therefore, while everything at home and abroad forebodes ruin to those who persist in a hopeless struggle against the spirit of the age, now, while the crash of the proudest throne of the Continent is still resounding in our ears, now, while the roof of a British palace affords an ignominious shelter to the exiled heir of forty kings, now, while we see on every side ancient institutions subverted, and great societies dissolved, now, while the heart of England is still sound, now, while old feelings and old associations retain a power and a charm which may too soon pass away, now, in this your accepted time, now, in this your day of salvation, take counsel, not of prejudice, not of party spirit, not of the ignominious pride of a fatal consistency, but of history, of reason, of the ages which are past, of the signs of this most portentous time. Pronounce in a manner worthy of the expectation with which this great debate has been anticipated, and of the long remembrance which it will leave behind. Renew the youth of the State. Save property, divided against itself. Save the multitude, endangered by its own ungovernable passions. Save the aristocracy, endangered by its own unpopular power. Save the greatest, and fairest, and most highly civilised community that ever existed, from calamities which may in a few days sweep away all the rich heritage of so many ages of wisdom and glory. The danger is terrible. The time is short. If this bill should be rejected, I pray to God that none of those who concur in rejecting it may ever remember their votes with unavailing remorse, amidst the wreck of laws, the confusion of ranks, the spoliation of property, and the dissolution of social order.

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* Sir Robert Peel.

A SPEECH

DELIVERED IN THE HOUSE OF COMMONS ON THE 5TH OF JULY 1831.

On Tuesday, the fourth of July 1831, Lord John Russell moved the second reading of the Bill to amend the representation of the people in England and Wales. Sir John Walsh, member for Sudbury, moved, as an amendment, that the bill should be read that day six months. After a discussion, which lasted three nights, the amendment was rejected by 367 votes to 231, and the original motion was carried. The following Speech was made on the second night of the debate.

NOBODY, Sir, who has watched the course of the debate can have failed to observe that the gentlemen who oppose this bill have chiefly relied on a preliminary objection, which it is necessary to clear away before we proceed to examine whether the proposed changes in our representative system would or would not be improvements. The elective franchise, we are told, is private property. It belongs to this freeman, to that potwalloper, to the owner of this house, to the owner of that old wall; and you have no more right to take it away without compensation than to confiscate the dividends of a fundholder or the rents of a landholder.

Now, Sir, I admit that, if this objection be well founded, it is decisive against the plan of Reform which has been submitted to us. If the franchise be really private property, we have no more right to take members away from Gatton because Gatton is small, and to give them to Manchester because Manchester is large, than Cyrus, in the old story, had to take away the big coat from the little boy and to put it on the big boy. In no case, and under no pretext however specious, would I take away from any member of the community anything which is of the nature of property, without giving him full compensation. But I deny that the elective franchise is of the nature of property; and I believe that, on this point, I have with me all reason, all precedent, and all authority. This at least is certain, that, if disfranchisement really be robbery, the representative system which now exists is founded on robbery. How was the franchise in the English counties fixed? By the act of Henry the Sixth, which disfranchised tens of thousands of electors who had not forty shilling freeholds. Was that robbery? How was the franchise in the Irish counties fixed? By the act of George the Fourth, which disfranchised tens of thousands of electors who had not ten pound freeholds. Was that robbery? Or was the great parliamentary reform made by Oliver Cromwell ever designated as robbery, even by those who most abhorred his name? Everybody knows that the unsparing manner in which he disfranchised small boroughs was emulously applauded, by royalists, who hated him for having pulled down one dynasty, and by republicans, who hated him for having founded another. Take Sir Harry Vane and Lord Clarendon, both wise men, both, I believe, in the main, honest men, but as much opposed to each other in politics as wise and honest men could be. Both detested Oliver; yet both approved of Oliver's plan of parliamentary reform. They grieved only that so salutary a change should have been made by an usurper. Vane wished it to have been made by the Rump; Clarendon wished it to be made by the King. Clarendon's language on this subject is most remarkable. For he was no rash innovator. The bias of his mind was altogether on the side of antiquity and prescription. Yet he describes that great disfranchisement of boroughs as an improvement fit to be made in a more warrantable method and at a better time. The words were prophetic. This is that more warrantable method. This is that better time. What Cromwell attempted to effect by an usurped authority, in a country which had lately been convulsed by civil war, and which was with difficulty kept in a state of sullen tranquillity by military force, it has fallen to our lot to accomplish in profound peace, and under the rule of a prince whose title is unquestioned, whose office is reverenced, and whose person is beloved. It is easy to conceive with what scorn and astonishment Clarendon would have heard it said that the reform which seemed to him so obviously just and reasonable that he praised it, even when made by a regicide, could not, without the grossest iniquity, be made even by a lawful King and a lawful Parliament.

Sir, in the name of the institution of property, of that great institution, for the sake of which, chiefly, all other institutions exist, of that great institution to which we owe all knowledge, all commerce, all industry, all civilisation, all that makes us to differ from the tattooed savages of the Pacific Ocean, I protest against the pernicious practice of ascribing to that which is not property the sanctity which belongs to property alone. If, in order to save political abuses from that fate with which they are threatened by the public hatred, you claim for them the immunities of property, you must expect that property will be regarded with some portion of the hatred which is excited by political abuses. You bind up two very different things, in the hope that they may stand together. Take heed that they do not fall together. You tell the people that it is as unjust to disfranchise a great lord's nomination borough as to confiscate his estate. Take heed that you do not succeed in convincing weak and ignorant minds that there is no more injustice in confiscating his estate than in disfranchising his borough. That this is no imaginary danger, your own speeches in this debate abundantly prove. You begin by ascribing to the franchises of Old Sarum the sacredness of property; and you end, naturally enough, I must own, by treating the rights of property as lightly as I should be inclined to treat the franchises of Old Sarum. When you are reminded that you voted, only two years ago, for disfranchising great numbers of freeholders in Ireland, and when you are asked how, on the principles which you now profess, you can justify that vote, you answer very coolly, "No doubt that was confiscation. No doubt we took away from the peasants of Munster and Connaught, without giving them a farthing of compensation, that which was as much their property as their pigs or their frieze coats. But we did it for the public good. We were pressed by a great State necessity." Sir, if that be an answer, we too may plead that we too have the public good in view, and that we are pressed by a great State necessity. But I shall resort to no such plea. It fills me with indignation and alarm to hear grave men avow what they own to be downright robbery, and justify that robbery on the ground of political convenience. No, Sir, there is one way, and only one way, in which those gentlemen who voted for the disfranchising Act of 1829 can clear their fame. Either they have no defence, or their defence must be this; that the elective franchise is not of the nature of property, and that therefore disfranchisement is not spoliation.

Having disposed, as I think, of the question of right, I come to the question of expediency. I listened, Sir, with much interest and pleasure to a noble Lord who spoke for the first time in this debate.* But I must own that he did not succeed in convincing me that there is any real ground for the fears by which he is tormented. He gave us a history of France since the Restoration. He told us of the violent ebbs and flows of public feeling in that country. He told us that the revolutionary party was fast rising to ascendency while M. De Cazes was minister; that then came a violent reaction in favour of the monarchy and the priesthood; that then the revolutionary party again became dominant; that there had been a change of dynasty; and that the Chamber of Peers had ceased to be a hereditary body. He then predicted, if I understood him rightly, that, if we pass this bill, we shall suffer all that France has suffered; that we shall have violent contests between extreme parties, a revolution, and an abolition of the House of Lords. I might, perhaps, dispute the accuracy of some parts of the noble Lord's narrative. But I deny that his narrative, accurate or inaccurate, is relevant. I deny that there is any analogy between the state of France and the state of England. I deny that there is here any great party which answers either to the revolutionary or to the counter-revolutionary party in France. I most emphatically deny that there is any resemblance in the character, and that there is likely to be any resemblance in the fate, of the two Houses of Peers. I always regarded the hereditary Chamber established by Louis the Eighteenth as an institution which could not last. It was not in harmony with the state of property; it was not in harmony with the public feeling; it had neither the strength which is derived from wealth, nor the strength which is derived from prescription. It was despised as plebeian by the ancient nobility. It was hated as patrician by the democrats. It belonged neither to the old France nor to the new France. It was a mere exotic transplanted from our island. Here it had struck its roots deep, and having stood during ages, was still green and vigorous. But it languished in the foreign soil and the foreign air, and was blown down by the first storm. It will be no such easy task to uproot the aristocracy of England.

With much more force, at least with much more plausibility, the noble Lord and several other members on the other side of the House have argued against the proposed Reform on the ground that the existing system has worked well. How great a country, they say, is ours! How eminent in wealth and knowledge, in arts and arms! How much admired! How much envied! Is it possible to believe that we have become what we are under a bad government! And, if we have a good government, why alter it? Now, Sir, I am very far from denying that England is great, and prosperous, and highly civilised. I am equally far from denying that she owes much of her greatness, of her prosperity, and of her civilisation to her form of government. But is no nation ever to reform its institutions because it has made great progress under those institutions? Why, Sir, the progress is the very thing which makes the reform absolutely necessary. The Czar Peter, we all know, did much for Russia. But for his rude genius and energy, that country might have still been utterly barbarous. Yet would it be reasonable to say that the Russian people ought always, to the end of time, to be despotically governed, because the Czar Peter was a despot? Let us remember that the government and the society act and react on each other. Sometimes the government is in advance of the society, and hurries the society forward.

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* Lord Porchester.

So urged, the society gains on the government, comes up with the government, outstrips the government, and begins to insist that the government shall make more speed. If the government is wise, it will yield to that just and natural demand. The great cause of revolutions is this, that while nations move onward, constitutions stand still. The peculiar happiness of England is that here, through many generations, the constitution has moved onward with the nation. Gentlemen have told us, that the most illustrious foreigners have, in every age, spoken with admiration of the English constitution. Comines, they say, in the fifteenth century, extolled the English constitution as the best in the world. Montesquieu, in the eighteenth century, extolled it as the best in the world. And would it not be madness in us to throw away what such men thought the most precious of all our blessings? But was the constitution which Montesquieu praised the same with the constitution which Comines praised? No, Sir; if it had been so, Montesquieu never would have praised it. For how was it possible that a polity which exactly suited the subjects of Edward the Fourth should have exactly suited the subjects of George the Second? The English have, it is true, long been a great and a happy people. But they have been great and happy because their history has been the history of a succession of timely reforms. The Great Charter, the assembling of the first House of Commons, the Petition of Right, the Declaration of Right, the Bill which is now on our table, what are they all but steps in one great progress? To every one of those steps the same objections might have been made which we heard to-night, "You are better off than your neighbours are. You are better off than your fathers were. Why can you not leave well alone?"

How copiously might a Jacobite orator have harangued on this topic in the Convention of 1688! "Why make a change of dynasty? Why trouble ourselves to devise new securities for our laws and liberties? See what a nation we are. See how population and wealth have increased since what you call the good old times of Queen Elizabeth. You cannot deny that the country has been more prosperous under the kings of the House of Stuart than under any of their predecessors. Keep that House, then, and be thankful." Just such is the reasoning of the opponents of this bill. They tell us that we are an ungrateful people, and that, under institutions from which we have derived inestimable benefits, we are more discontented than the slaves of the Dey of Tripoli. Sir, if we had been slaves of the Dey of Tripoli, we should have been too much sunk in intellectual and moral degradation to be capable of the rational and manly discontent of freemen. It is precisely because our institutions are so good that we are not perfectly contented with them; for they have educated us into a capacity for enjoying still better institutions. That the English Government has generally been in advance of almost all other governments is true. But it is equally true that the English nation is, and has during some time been, in advance of the English Government. One plain proof of this is, that nothing is so ill made in our island as the laws. In all those things which depend on the intelligence, the knowledge, the industry, the energy of individuals, or of voluntary combinations of individuals, this country stands pre-eminent among all the countries of the world, ancient and modern. But in those things which it belongs to the State to direct, we have no such claim to superiority. Our fields are cultivated with a skill unknown elsewhere, with a skill which has extorted rich harvests from moors and morasses. Our houses are filled with conveniences which the kings of former times might have envied. Our bridges, our canals, our roads, our modes of communication, fill every stranger with wonder. Nowhere are manufactures carried to such perfection. Nowhere is so vast a mass of mechanical power collected. Nowhere does man exercise such a dominion over matter. These are the works of the nation. Compare them with the works of the rulers of the nation. Look at the criminal law, at the civil law, at the modes of conveying lands, at the modes of conducting actions. It is by these things that we must judge of our legislators, just as we judge of our manufacturers by the cotton goods and the cutlery which they produce, just as we judge of our engineers by the suspension bridges, the tunnels, the steam carriages which they construct. Is, then, the machinery by which justice is administered framed with the same exquisite skill which is found in other kinds of machinery? Can there be a stronger contrast than that which exists between the beauty, the completeness, the speed, the precision with which every process is performed in our factories, and the awkwardness, the rudeness, the slowness, the uncertainty of the apparatus by which offences are punished and rights vindicated? Look at that series of penal statutes, the most bloody and the most inefficient in the world, at the puerile fictions which make every declaration and every plea unintelligible both to plaintiff and defendant, at the mummery of fines and recoveries, at the chaos of precedents, at the bottomless pit of Chancery. Surely we see the barbarism of the thirteenth century and the highest civilisation of the nineteenth century side by side; and we see that the barbarism belongs to the government, and the civilisation to the people.

This is a state of things which cannot last. If it be not terminated by wisdom, it will be terminated by violence. A time has come at which it is not merely desirable, but indispensable to the public safety, that the government should be brought into harmony with the people; and it is because this bill seems to me likely to bring the government into harmony with the people, that I feel it to be my duty to give my hearty support to His Majesty's Ministers.

We have been told, indeed, that this is not the plan of Reform which the nation asked for. Be it so. But you cannot deny that it is the plan of Reform which the nation has accepted. That, though differing in many respects from what was asked, it has been accepted with transports of joy and gratitude, is a decisive proof of the wisdom of timely concession. Never in the history of the world was there so signal an example of that true statesmanship, which, at once animating and gently curbing the honest enthusiasm of millions, guides it safely and steadily to a happy goal. It is not strange, that when men are refused what is reasonable, they should demand what is unreasonable. It is not strange that, when they find that their opinion is contemned and neglected by the Legislature, they should lend a too favourable ear to worthless agitators. We have seen how discontent may be produced. We have seen, too, how it may be appeased. We have seen that the true source of the power of demagogues is the obstinacy of rulers, and that a liberal Government makes a conservative people. Early in the last session, the First Minister of the Crown declared that he would consent to no Reform; that he thought our representative system, just as it stood, the masterpiece of human wisdom; that, if he had to make it anew, he would make it such as it was, with all its represented ruins and all its unrepresented cities. What followed? Everything was tumult and panic. The funds fell. The streets were insecure. Men's hearts failed them for fear. We began to move our property into German investments and American investments. Such was the state of the public mind, that it was not thought safe to let the Sovereign pass from his palace to the Guildhall of his capital. What part of his kingdom is there in which His Majesty now needs any other guard than the affection of his loving subjects? There are, indeed, still malecontents; and they may be divided into two classes, the friends of corruption and the sowers of sedition. It is natural that all who directly profit by abuses, and all who profit by the disaffection which abuses excite, should be leagued together against a bill which, by making the government pure, will make the nation loyal. There is, and always has been, a real alliance between the two extreme parties in this country. They play into each other's hands. They live by each other. Neither would have any influence if the other were taken away. The demagogue would have no audience but for the indignation excited among the multitude by the insolence of the enemies of Reform: and the last hope of the enemies of Reform is in the uneasiness excited among all who have anything to lose by the ravings of the demagogue. I see, and glad I am to see, that the nation perfectly understands and justly appreciates this coalition between those who hate all liberty and those who hate all order. England has spoken, and spoken out. From her most opulent seaports, from her manufacturing towns, from her capital and its gigantic suburbs, from almost every one of her counties, has gone forth a voice, answering in no doubtful or faltering accent to that truly royal voice which appealed on the twenty-second of last April to the sense of the nation.

So clearly, indeed, has the sense of the nation been expressed, that scarcely any person now ventures to declare himself hostile to all Reform. We are, it seems, a House of Reformers. Those very gentlemen who, a few months ago, were vehement against all change, now own that some change may be proper, may be necessary. They assure us that their opposition is directed, not against Parliamentary Reform, but against the particular plan which is now before us, and that a Tory Ministry would devise a much better plan. I cannot but think that these tactics are unskilful. I cannot but think that, when our opponents defended the existing system in every part, they occupied a stronger position than at present. As my noble friend the Paymaster-General said, they have committed an error resembling that of the Scotch army at Dunbar. They have left the high ground from which we might have had some difficulty in dislodging them. They have come down to low ground, where they are at our mercy. Surely, as Cromwell said, surely the Lord hath delivered them into our hand.

For, Sir, it is impossible not to perceive that almost every argument which they have urged against this Reform Bill may be urged with equal force, or with greater force, against any Reform Bill which they can themselves bring in.

First take, what, indeed, are not arguments, but wretched substitutes for arguments, those vague terms of reproach, which have been so largely employed, here and elsewhere, by our opponents; revolutionary, anarchical, traitorous, and so forth. It will, I apprehend, hardly be disputed that these epithets can be just as easily applied to one Reform Bill as to another.

But, you say, intimidation has been used to promote the passing of this bill; and it would be disgraceful, and of evil example, that Parliament should yield to intimidation. But surely, if that argument be of any force against the present bill, it will be of tenfold force against any Reform Bill proposed by you. For this bill is the work of men who are Reformers from conscientious conviction, of men, some of whom were Reformers when Reformer was a name of reproach, of men, all of whom were Reformers before the nation had begun to demand Reform in imperative and menacing tones. But you are notoriously Reformers merely from fear. You are Reformers under duress. If a concession is to be made to the public importunity, you can hardly deny that it will be made with more grace and dignity by Lord Grey than by you.

Then you complain of the anomalies of the bill. One county, you say, will have twelve members; and another county, which is larger and more populous, will have only ten. Some towns, which are to have only one member, are more considerable than other towns which are to have two. Do those who make these objections, objections which by the by will be more in place when the bill is in committee, seriously mean to say that a Tory Reform Bill will leave no anomalies in the representative system? For my own part, I trouble myself not at all about anomalies, considered merely as anomalies. I would not take the trouble of lifting up my hand to get rid of an anomaly that was not also a grievance. But if gentlemen have such a horror of anomalies, it is strange that they should so long have persisted in upholding a system made up of anomalies far greater than any that can be found in this bill (a cry of *No!*). Yes; far greater. Answer me, if you can; but do not interrupt me. On this point, indeed, it is much easier to interrupt than to answer. For who can answer plain arithmetical demonstration? Under the present system, Manchester, with two hundred thousand inhabitants, has no members. Old Sarum, with no inhabitants, has two members. Find me such an anomaly in the schedules which are now on the table. But is it possible that you, that Tories, can seriously mean to adopt the only plan which can remove all anomalies from the representative system? Are you prepared to have, after every decennial census, a new distribution of members among electoral districts? Is your plan of Reform that which Mr Canning satirised as the most crazy of all the projects of the disciples of Tom Paine? Do you really mean

> "That each fair burgh, numerically free,
> Shall choose its members by the rule of three?"

If not, let us hear no more of the anomalies of the Reform Bill.

But your great objection to this bill is that it will not be final. I ask you whether you think that any Reform Bill which you can frame will be final? For my part I do believe that the settlement proposed by His Majesty's Ministers will be final, in the only sense in which a wise man ever uses that word. I believe that it will last during that time for which alone we ought at present to think of legislating. Another generation may find in the new representative system defects such as we find in the old representative system. Civilisation will proceed. Wealth will increase. Industry and trade will find out new seats. The same causes which have turned so many villages into great towns, which have turned so many thousands of square miles of fir and heath into cornfields and orchards, will continue to operate. Who can say that a hundred years hence there may not be, on the shore of some desolate and silent bay in the Hebrides, another Liverpool, with its docks and warehouses and endless forests of masts? Who can say that the huge chimneys of another Manchester may not rise in the wilds of Connemara? For our children we do not pretend to legislate. All that we can do for them is to leave to them a memorable example of the manner in which great reforms ought to be made. In the only sense, therefore, in which a statesman ought to say that anything is final, I pronounce this bill final. But in what sense will your bill be final? Suppose that you could defeat the Ministers, that you could displace them, that you could form a Government, that you could obtain a majority in this House, what course would events take? There is no difficulty in foreseeing the stages of the rapid progress downward. First we should have a mock reform; a Bassietlaw reform; a reform worthy of those politicians who, when a delinquent borough had forfeited its franchise, and when it was necessary for them to determine what they would do with two seats in Parliament, deliberately gave those seats, not to Manchester or Birmingham or Leeds, not to Lancashire or Staffordshire or Devonshire, but to a constituent body studiously selected because it was not large and because it was not independent; a reform worthy of those politicians who, only twelve months ago, refused to give members to the three greatest manufacturing towns in the world. We should have a reform which would produce all the evils and none of the benefits of change, which would take away from the representative system the foundation of prescription, and yet would not substitute the surer foundation of reason and public good. The people would be at once emboldened and exasperated; emboldened because they would see that they had frightened the Tories into making a pretence of reforming the Parliament; and exasperated because they would see that the Tory Reform was a mere pretence. Then would come agitation, tumult, political associations, libels, inflammatory harangues. Coercion would only aggravate the evil. This is no age, this is no country, for the war of power against opinion. Those Jacobin mountebanks, whom this bill would at once send back to their native obscurity, would rise into fearful importance. The law would be sometimes braved and sometimes evaded. In short, England would soon be what Ireland was at the beginning of 1829. Then, at length, as in 1829, would come the late and vain repentance. Then, Sir, amidst the generous cheers of the Whigs, who will be again occupying their old seats on your left hand, and amidst the indignant murmurs of those stanch Tories who are now again trusting to be again betrayed, the right honourable Baronet opposite will rise from the Treasury Bench to propose that bill on which the hearts of the people are set. But will that bill be then accepted with the delight and thankfulness with which it was received last March? Remember Ireland. Remember how, in that country, concessions too long delayed were at last received. That great boon which in 1801, in 1813, in 1825, would have won the hearts of millions, given too late, and given from fear, only produced new clamours and new dangers. Is not one such lesson enough for one generation? A noble Lord opposite told us not to expect that this bill will have a conciliatory effect. Recollect, he said, how the French aristocracy surrendered their privileges in 1789, and how that surrender was requited. Recollect that Day of Sacrifices which was afterwards called the Day of Dupes. Sir, that day was afterwards called the Day of Dupes, not because it was the Day of Sacrifices, but because it was the Day of Sacrifices too long deferred. It was because the French aristocracy resisted reform in 1783, that they were unable to resist revolution in 1789. It was because they clung too long to odious exemptions and distinctions, that they were at last unable to save their lands, their mansions, their heads. They would not endure Turgot: and they had to endure Robespierre.

I am far indeed from wishing that the Members of this House should be influenced by fear in the bad and unworthy sense of that word. But there is an honest and honourable fear, which well becomes those who are intrusted with the dearest interests of a great community; and to that fear I am not ashamed to make an earnest appeal. It is very well to talk of confronting sedition boldly, and of enforcing the law against those who would disturb the public peace. No doubt a tumult caused by local and temporary irritation ought to be suppressed with promptitude and vigour. Such disturbances, for example, as those which Lord George Gordon raised in 1780, should be instantly put down with the strong hand. But woe to the Government which cannot distinguish between a nation and a mob! Woe to the Government which thinks that a great, a steady, a long continued movement of the public mind is to be stopped like a street riot! This error has been twice fatal to the great House of Bourbon. God be praised, our rulers have been wiser. The golden opportunity which, if once suffered to escape, might never have been retrieved, has been seized. Nothing, I firmly believe, can now prevent the passing of this noble law, this second Bill of Rights. [*Murmurs.*] Yes, I call it, and the nation calls it, and our posterity will long call it, this second Bill of Rights, this Greater Charter of the Liberties of England. The year 1831 will, I trust, exhibit the first example of the manner in which it behoves a free and enlightened people to purify their polity from old and deeply seated abuses, without bloodshed, without violence, without rapine, all points freely debated, all the forms of senatorial deliberation punctiliously observed, industry and trade not for a moment interrupted, the authority of law not for a moment suspended. These are things of which we may well be proud. These are things which swell the heart up with a good hope for the destinies of mankind. I cannot but anticipate a long series of happy years; of years during which a parental Government will be firmly supported by a grateful nation: of years during which war, if war should be inevitable, will find us an united people; of years pre-eminently distinguished by the progress of arts, by the improvement of laws, by the augmentation of the public resources, by the diminution of the public burdens, by all those victories of peace, in which, far more than in any military successes, consists the true felicity of states, and the true glory of statesmen. With such hopes, Sir, and such feelings, I give my cordial assent to the second reading of a bill which I consider as in itself deserving of the warmest approbation, and as indispensably necessary, in the present temper of the public mind, to the repose of the country and to the stability of the throne.

A SPEECH

DELIVERED IN THE HOUSE OF COMMONS ON THE 20TH OF SEPTEMBER 1831.

On Monday, the nineteenth of September, 1831, the Bill to amend the representation of the people in England and Wales was read a third time, at an early hour and in a thin house, without any debate. But on the question whether the Bill should pass a discussion arose which lasted three nights. On the morning of the twenty-second of September the House divided; and the Bill passed by 345 votes to 236. The following Speech was made on the second night of the debate.

It is not without great diffidence, Sir, that I rise to address you on a subject which has been nearly exhausted. Indeed, I should not have risen had I not thought that, though the arguments on this question are for the most part old, our situation at present is in a great measure new. At length the Reform Bill, having passed without vital injury through all the dangers which threatened it, during a long and minute discussion, from the attacks of its enemies and from the dissensions of its friends, comes before us for our final ratification, altered, indeed, in some of its details for the better, and in some for the worse, but in its great principles still the same bill which, on the first of March, was proposed to the late Parliament, the same bill which was received with joy and gratitude by the whole nation, the same bill which, in an instant, took away the power of interested agitators, and united in one firm body all the sects of sincere Reformers, the same bill which, at the late election, received the approbation of almost every great constituent body in the empire. With a confidence which discussion has only strengthened, with an assured hope of great public blessings if the wish of the nation shall be gratified, with a deep and solemn apprehension of great public calamities if that wish shall be disappointed, I, for the last time, give my most hearty assent to this noble law, destined, I trust, to be the parent of many good laws, and, through a long series of years, to secure the repose and promote the prosperity of my country.

When I say that I expect this bill to promote the prosperity of the country, I by no means intend to encourage those chimerical hopes which the honourable and learned Member for Rye,* who has so much distinguished himself in this debate, has imputed to the Reformers. The people, he says, are for the bill, because they expect that it will immediately relieve all their distresses. Sir, I believe that very few of that large and respectable class which we are now about to admit to a share of political power entertain any such absurd expectation. They expect relief, I doubt not; and I doubt not that they will find it: but sudden relief they are far too wise to expect. The bill, says the honourable and learned gentleman, is good for nothing: it is merely theoretical: it removes no real and sensible evil: it will not give the people more work, or higher wages, or cheaper bread. Undoubtedly, Sir, the bill will not immediately give all those things to the people. But will any institutions give them all those things? Do the present institutions of the country secure to them those advantages? If we are to pronounce the Reform Bill good for nothing, because it will not at once raise the nation from distress to prosperity, what are we to say of that system under which the nation has been of late sinking from prosperity into distress? The defect is not in the Reform Bill, but in the very nature of government. On the physical condition of the great body of the people, government acts not as a specific, but as an alterative. Its operation is powerful, indeed, and certain, but gradual and indirect. The business of government is not directly to make the people rich, but to protect them in making themselves rich; and a government which attempts more than this is precisely the government which is likely to perform less. Governments do not and cannot support the people. We have no miraculous powers: we have not the rod of the Hebrew lawgiver: we cannot rain down bread on the multitude from Heaven: we cannot smite the rock and give them to drink. We can give them only freedom to employ their industry to the best advantage, and security in the enjoyment of what their industry has acquired. These advantages it is our duty to give at the smallest possible cost. The diligence and forethought of individuals will thus have fair play; and it is only by the diligence and forethought of individuals that the community can become prosperous. I am not aware that His Majesty's Ministers, or any of the supporters of this bill, have encouraged the people to hope, that Reform will remove distress, in any other way than by this indirect process. By this indirect process the bill will, I feel assured, conduce to the national prosperity. If it had been passed fifteen years ago, it would have saved us from our present embarrassments. If we pass it now, it will gradually extricate us from them. It will secure to us a House of Commons, which, by preserving peace, by destroying monopolies, by taking away unnecessary public burthens, by judiciously distributing necessary public burthens, will, in the progress of time, greatly improve our condition. This it will do; and those who blame it for not doing more blame it for not doing what no Constitution, no code of laws, ever did or ever will do; what no legislator, who was not an ignorant and unprincipled quack, ever ventured to promise.

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* Mr Pemberton

But chimerical as are the hopes which the honourable and learned Member for Rye imputes to the people, they are not, I think, more chimerical than the fears which he has himself avowed. Indeed, those very gentlemen who are constantly telling us that we are taking a leap in the dark, that we pay no attention to the lessons of experience, that we are mere theorists, are themselves the despisers of experience, are themselves the mere theorists. They are terrified at the thought of admitting into Parliament members elected by ten pound householders. They have formed in their own imaginations a most frightful idea of these members. My honourable and learned friend, the Member for Cockermouth,* is certain that these members will take every opportunity of promoting the interests of the journeyman in opposition to those of the capitalist. The honourable and learned Member for Rye is convinced that none but persons who have strong local connections, will ever be returned for such constituent bodies. My honourable friend, the Member for Thetford,† tells us, that none but mob orators, men who are willing to pay the basest court to the multitude, will have any chance. Other speakers have gone

* Sir James Scarlett.

† Mr Alexander Baring.

still further, and have described to us the future borough members as so many Marats and Santerres, low, fierce, desperate men, who will turn the House into a bear-garden, and who will try to turn the monarchy into a republic, mere agitators, without honour, without sense, without education, without the feelings or the manners of gentlemen. Whenever, during the course of the fatiguing discussions by which we have been so long occupied, there has been a cry of "question," or a noise at the bar, the orator who has been interrupted has remarked, that such proceedings will be quite in place in the Reformed Parliament, but that we ought to remember that the House of Commons is still an assembly of gentlemen. This, I say, is to set up mere theory, or rather mere prejudice, in opposition to long and ample experience. Are the gentlemen who talk thus ignorant that we have already the means of judging what kind of men the ten pound householders will send up to parliament? Are they ignorant that there are even now large towns with very popular franchises, with franchises even more democratic than those which will be bestowed by the present bill? Ought they not, on their own principles, to look at the results of the experiments which have already been made, instead of predicting frightful calamities at random? How do the facts which are before us agree with their theories? Nottingham is a city with a franchise even more democratic than that which this bill establishes. Does Nottingham send hither mere vulgar demagogues? It returns two distinguished men, one an advocate, the other a soldier, both unconnected with the town. Every man paying scot and lot has a vote at Leicester. This is a lower franchise than the ten pound franchise. Do we find that the Members for Leicester are the mere tools of the journeymen? I was at Leicester during the contest of 1826; and I recollect that the suffrages of the scot and lot voters were pretty equally divided between two candidates, neither of them connected with the place, neither of them a slave of the mob, one a Tory Baronet from Derbyshire, the other a most respectable and excellent friend of mine, connected with the manufacturing interest, and also an inhabitant of Derbyshire. Look at Norwich. Look at Northampton, with a franchise more democratic than even the scot and lot franchise. Northampton formerly returned Mr Perceval, and now returns gentlemen of high respectability, gentlemen who have a great stake in the prosperity and tranquillity of the country. Look at the metropolitan districts. This is an *a fortiori* case. Nay it is —the expression, I fear, is awkward—an *a fortiori* case at two removes. The ten pound householders of the metropolis are persons in a lower station of life than the ten pound householders of other towns. The scot and lot franchise in the metropolis is again lower than the ten pound franchise. Yet have Westminster and Southwark been in the habit of sending us members of whom we have had reason to be ashamed, of whom we have not had reason to be proud? I do not say that the inhabitants of Westminster and Southwark have always expressed their political sentiments with proper moderation. That is not the question. The question is this: what kind of men have they elected? The very principle of all Representative government is, that men who do not judge well of public affairs may be quite competent to choose others who will judge better. Whom, then, have Westminster and Southwark sent us during the last fifty years, years full of great events, years of intense popular excitement? Take any one of those nomination boroughs, the patrons of which have conscientiously endeavoured to send fit men into this House. Compare the Members for that borough with the

Members for Westminster and Southwark; and you will have no doubt to which the preference is due. It is needless to mention Mr Fox, Mr Sheridan, Mr Tierney, Sir Samuel Romilly. Yet I must pause at the name of Sir Samuel Romilly. Was he a mob orator? Was he a servile flatterer of the multitude? Sir, if he had any fault, if there was any blemish on that most serene and spotless character, that character which every public man, and especially every professional man engaged in politics, ought to propose to himself as a model, it was this, that he despised popularity too much and too visibly. The honourable Member for Thetford told us that the honourable and learned Member for Rye, with all his talents, would have no chance of a seat in the Reformed Parliament, for want of the qualifications which succeed on the hustings. Did Sir Samuel Romilly ever appear on the hustings of Westminster? He never solicited one vote; he never showed himself to the electors, till he had been returned at the head of the poll. Even then, as I have heard from one of his nearest relatives, it was with reluctance that he submitted to be chaired. He shrank from being made a show. He loved the people, and he served them; but Coriolanus himself was not less fit to canvass them. I will mention one other name, that of a man of whom I have only a childish recollection, but who must have been intimately known to many of those who hear me, Mr Henry Thornton. He was a man eminently upright, honourable, and religious, a man of strong understanding, a man of great political knowledge; but, in all respects, the very reverse of a mob orator. He was a man who would not have yielded to what he considered as unreasonable clamour, I will not say to save his seat, but to save his life. Yet he continued to represent Southwark, Parliament after Parliament, for many years. Such has been the conduct of the scot and lot voters of the metropolis; and there is clearly less reason to expect democratic violence from ten pound householders than from scot and lot householders; and from ten pound householders in the country towns than from ten pound householders in London. Experience, I say, therefore, is on our side; and on the side of our opponents nothing but mere conjecture and mere assertion.

Sir, when this bill was first brought forward, I supported it, not only on the ground of its intrinsic merits, but, also, because I was convinced that to reject it would be a course full of danger. I believe that the danger of that course is in no respect diminished. I believe, on the contrary, that it is increased. We are told that there is a reaction. The warmth of the public feeling, it seems, has abated. In this story both the sections of the party opposed to Reform are agreed; those who hate Reform, because it will remove abuses, and those who hate it, because it will avert anarchy; those who wish to see the electing body controlled by ejectments, and those who wish to see it controlled by riots. They must now, I think, be undeceived. They must have already discovered that the surest way to prevent a reaction is to talk about it, and that the enthusiasm of the people is at once rekindled by any indiscreet mention of their seeming coolness. This, Sir, is not the first reaction which the sagacity of the Opposition has discovered since the Reform Bill was brought in. Every gentleman who sat in the late Parliament, every gentleman who, during the sitting of the late Parliament, paid attention to political speeches and publications, must remember how, for some time before the debate on General Gascoyne's motion, and during the debate on that motion, and down to the very day of the dissolution, we were told that public feeling had cooled. The right honourable Baronet, the Member for Tamworth, told us so. All the literary organs of the Opposition, from the Quarterly Review down to the Morning Post, told us so. All the Members of the Opposition with whom we conversed in private told us so. I have in my eye a noble friend of mine, who assured me, on the very night which preceded the dissolution, that the people had ceased to be zealous for the Ministerial plan, and that we were more likely to lose than to gain by the elections. The appeal was made to the people; and what was the result? What sign of a reaction appeared among the Livery of London? What sign of a reaction did the honourable Baronet who now represents Okehampton find among the freeholders of Cornwall?* How was it with the large represented towns? Had Liverpool cooled? or Bristol? or Leicester? or Coventry? or Nottingham? or Norwich? How was it with the great seats of manufacturing industry, Yorkshire, and Lancashire, and Staffordshire, and Warwickshire, and Cheshire? How was it with the agricultural districts, Northumberland and Cumberland, Leicestershire and Lincolnshire, Kent and Essex, Oxfordshire, Hampshire, Somersetshire, Dorsetshire, Devonshire? How was it with the strongholds of aristocratical influence, Newark, and Stamford, and Hertford, and St Alban's? Never did any people display, within the limits prescribed by law, so generous a fervour, or so steadfast a determination, as that very people whose apparent languor had just before inspired the enemies of Reform with a delusive hope.

Such was the end of the reaction of April; and, if that lesson shall not profit those to whom it was given, such and yet more signal will be the end of the reaction of September. The two cases are strictly analogous. In both cases the people were eager when they believed the bill to be in danger, and quiet when they believed it to be in security. During the three or four weeks which followed the promulgation of the Ministerial plan, all was joy, and gratitude, and vigorous exertion. Everywhere meetings were held: everywhere resolutions were passed: from every quarter were sent up petitions to this House, and addresses to the Throne: and then the nation, having given vent to its first feelings of delight, having clearly and strongly expressed its opinions, having seen the principle of the bill adopted by the House of Commons on the second reading, became composed, and awaited the result with a tranquillity which the Opposition mistook for indifference. All at once the aspect of affairs changed. General Gascoyne's amendment was carried: the bill was again in danger: exertions were again necessary. Then was it well seen whether the calmness of the public mind was any indication of indifference. The depth and sincerity of the prevailing sentiments were proved, not by mere talking, but by actions, by votes, by sacrifices. Intimidation was defied: expenses were rejected: old ties were broken: the people struggled manfully: they triumphed gloriously: they placed the bill in perfect security, as far as this house was concerned; and they returned to their repose. They are now, as they were on the eve of General Gascoyne's motion, awaiting the issue of the deliberations of Parliament, without any indecent show of violence, but with anxious interest and immovable resolution. And because they are not exhibiting that noisy and rapturous enthusiasm which is in its own nature transient, because they are not as much excited as on the day when the plan of the Government was first made known to them, or on the day when the late Parliament was dissolved, because they do not go on week after week, hallooing, and holding meetings, and marching about with flags, and making bonfires, and illuminating their houses, we are again told that there is a reaction. To such a degree can men be deceived by their wishes, in spite of their own recent experience. Sir, there is no reaction; and there will be no reaction. All that has been said on this subject convinces me only that those who are now, for the second time, raising this cry, know nothing of the crisis in which they are called on to act, or of the nation which they aspire to govern. All their opinions respecting this bill are founded on one great error. They imagine that the public feeling concerning Reform is a mere whim which sprang up suddenly out of nothing, and which will as suddenly vanish into nothing. They, therefore, confidently expect a reaction. They are always looking out for a reaction. Everything that they see, or that they hear, they construe into a sign of the approach of this reaction. They resemble the man in Horace, who lies on the bank of the river, expecting that it will every moment pass by and leave him a clear passage, not knowing the depth and abundance of the fountain which feeds it, not knowing that it flows, and will flow on for ever. They have found out a hundred ingenious devices by which they deceive themselves. Sometimes they tell us that the public feeling about Reform was caused by the events which took place at Paris about fourteen months ago; though every observant and impartial man knows, that the excitement which the late French revolution produced in England was not the cause but the effect of that progress which liberal opinions had made amongst us. Sometimes they tell us that we should not have been troubled with any complaints on the subject of the Representation, if the House of Commons had agreed to a certain motion, made in the session of 1830, for inquiry into the causes of the public distress. I remember nothing about that motion, except that it gave rise to the dullest debate ever known; and the country, I am firmly convinced, cared not one straw about it. But is it not strange that men of real ability can deceive themselves so grossly, as to think that any change in the government of a foreign nation, or the rejection of any single motion, however popular, could all at once raise up a great, rich, enlightened nation, against its ancient institutions? Could such small drops have produced an overflowing, if the vessel had not already been filled to the very brim? These explanations are incredible, and if they were credible, would be anything but consolatory. If it were really true that the English people had taken a sudden aversion to a representative system which they had always loved and admired, because a single division in Parliament had gone against their wishes, or because, in a foreign country, in circumstances bearing not the faintest analogy to those in which we are placed, a change of dynasty had happened, what hope could we have for such a nation of madmen? How could we expect that the present form of government, or any form of government, would be durable amongst them?

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* Sir Richard Vyvyan.

Sir, the public feeling concerning Reform is of no such recent origin, and springs from no such frivolous causes. Its first faint commencement may be traced far, very far, back in our history. During seventy years that feeling has had a great influence on the public mind. Through the first thirty years of the reign of George the Third, it was gradually increasing. The great leaders of the two parties in the State were favourable to Reform. Plans of reform were supported by large and most respectable minorities in the House of Commons. The French Revolution, filling the higher and middle classes with an extreme dread of change, and the war calling away the public attention from internal to external politics, threw the question back; but the people never lost sight of it. Peace came, and they were at leisure to think of domestic improvements. Distress came, and they suspected, as was natural, that their distress was the effect of unfaithful stewardship and unskilful legislation. An opinion favourable to Parliamentary Reform grew up rapidly, and became strong among the middle classes. But one tie, one strong tie, still bound those classes to the Tory party. I mean the Catholic Question. It is impossible to deny that, on that subject, a large proportion, a majority, I fear, of the middle class of Englishmen, conscientiously held opinions opposed to those which I have always entertained, and were disposed to sacrifice every other consideration to what they regarded as a religious duty. Thus the Catholic Question hid, so to speak, the question of Parliamentary Reform. The feeling in favour of Parliamentary Reform grew, but it grew in the shade. Every man, I think, must have observed the progress of that feeling in his own social circle. But few Reform meetings were held, and few petitions in favour of Reform presented. At length the Catholics were emancipated; the solitary link of sympathy which attached the people to the Tories was broken; the cry of "No Popery" could no longer be opposed to the cry of "Reform." That which, in the opinion of the two great parties in Parliament, and of a vast portion of the community, had been the first question, suddenly disappeared; and the question of Parliamentary Reform took the first place. Then was put forth all the strength which had been growing in silence and obscurity. Then it appeared that Reform had on its side a coalition of interests and opinions unprecedented in our history, all the liberality and intelligence which had supported the Catholic claims, and all the clamour which had opposed them.

This, I believe, is the true history of that public feeling on the subject of Reform which has been ascribed to causes quite inadequate to the production of such an effect. If ever there was in the history of mankind a national sentiment which was the very opposite of a caprice, with which accident had nothing to do, which was produced by the slow, steady, certain progress of the human mind, it is the sentiment of the English people on the subject of Reform. Accidental circumstances may have brought that feeling to maturity in a particular year, or a particular month. That point I will not dispute; for it is not worth disputing. But those accidental circumstances have brought on Reform, only as the circumstance that, at a particular time, indulgences were offered for sale in a particular town in Saxony, brought on the great separation from the Church of Rome. In both cases the public mind was prepared to move on the slightest impulse.

Thinking thus of the public opinion concerning Reform, being convinced that this opinion is the mature product of time and of discussion, I expect no reaction. I no more expect to see my countrymen again content with the mere semblance of a Representation, than to see them again drowning witches or burning heretics, trying causes by red hot ploughshares, or offering up human sacrifices to wicker idols. I no more expect a reaction in favour of Gatton and Old Sarum, than a reaction in favour of Thor and Odin. I should think such a reaction almost as much a miracle as that the shadow should go back upon the dial. Revolutions produced by violence are often followed by reactions; the victories of reason once gained, are gained for eternity.

In fact, if there be, in the present aspect of public affairs, any sign peculiarly full of evil omen to the opponents of Reform, it is that very calmness of the public mind on which they found their expectation of success. They think that it is the calmness of indifference. It is the calmness of confident hope: and in proportion to the confidence of hope will be the bitterness of disappointment. Disappointment, indeed, I do not anticipate. That we are certain of success in this House is now acknowledged; and our opponents have, in consequence, during the whole of this Session, and particularly during the present debate, addressed their arguments and exhortations rather to the Lords than to the assembly of which they are themselves Members. Their principal argument has always been, that the bill will destroy the peerage. The honourable and learned Member for Rye has, in plain terms, called on the Barons of England to save their order from democratic encroachments, by rejecting this measure. All these arguments, all these appeals, being interpreted, mean this: "Proclaim to your countrymen that you have no common interests with them, no common sympathies with them; that you can be powerful only by their weakness, and exalted only by their degradation; that the corruption which disgusts them, and the oppression against which their spirit rises up, are indispensable to your authority; that the freedom and purity of election are incompatible with the very existence of your House. Give them clearly to understand that your power rests, not as they have hitherto imagined, on their rational convictions, or on their habitual veneration, or on your own great property, but on a system fertile of political evils, fertile also of low iniquities of which ordinary justice takes cognisance. Bind up, in inseparable union, the privileges of your estate with the grievances of ours: resolve to stand or fall with abuses visibly marked out for destruction: tell the people that they are attacking you in attacking the three holes in the wall, and that they shall never get rid of the three holes in the wall, till they have got rid of you; that a hereditary peerage and a representative assembly, can co-exist only in name, and that, if they will have a real House of Peers, they must be content with a mock House of Commons." This, I say, is the advice given to the Lords by those who call themselves the friends of aristocracy. That advice so pernicious will not be followed, I am well assured; yet I cannot but listen to it with uneasiness. I cannot but wonder that it should proceed from the lips of men who are constantly lecturing us on the duty of consulting history and experience. Have they never heard what effects counsels like their own, when too faithfully followed, have produced? Have they never visited that neighbouring country, which still presents to the eye, even of a passing stranger, the signs of a great dissolution and renovation of society? Have they never walked by those stately mansions, now sinking into decay, and portioned out into lodging rooms, which line the silent streets of the Faubourg St Germain? Have they never seen the ruins of those castles whose terraces and gardens overhang the Loire? Have they never heard that from those magnificent hotels, from those ancient castles, an aristocracy as splendid, as brave, as proud, as accomplished, as ever Europe saw, was driven forth to exile and beggary, to implore the charity of hostile Governments and hostile creeds, to cut wood in the back settlements of America, or to teach French in the schoolrooms of London? And why were those haughty nobles destroyed with that utter destruction? Why were they scattered over the face of the earth, their titles abolished, their escutcheons defaced, their parks wasted, their palaces dismantled, their heritage given to strangers? Because they had no sympathy with the people, no discernment of the signs of their time; because, in the pride and narrowness of their hearts, they called those whose warnings might have saved them theorists and speculators; because they refused all concession till the time had arrived when no concession would avail. I have no apprehension that such a fate awaits the nobles of England. I draw no parallel between our aristocracy and that of France. Those who represent the peerage as a class whose power is incompatible with the just influence of the people in the State, draw that parallel, and not I. They do all in their power to place the Lords and Commons of England in that position with respect to each other in which the French gentry stood with respect to the Third Estate. But I am convinced that these advisers will not succeed. We see, with pride and delight, among the friends of the people, the Talbots, the Cavendishes, the princely house of Howard. Foremost among those who have entitled themselves, by their exertions in this House, to the lasting gratitude of their countrymen, we see the descendants of Marlborough, of Russell, and of Derby. I hope, and firmly believe, that the Lords will see what their interests and their honour require. I hope, and firmly believe, that they will act in such a manner as to entitle themselves to the esteem and affection of the people. But if not, let not the enemies of Reform imagine that their reign is straightway to recommence, or that they have obtained anything more than a short and uneasy respite. We are bound to respect the constitutional rights of the Peers; but we are bound also not to forget our own. We, too, have our privileges; we, too, are an estate of the realm. A House of Commons strong in the love and confidence of the people, a House of Commons which has nothing to fear from a dissolution, is something in the government. Some persons, I well know, indulge a hope that the rejection of the bill will at once restore the domination of that party which fled from power last November, leaving everything abroad and everything at home in confusion; leaving the European system, which it had built up at a vast cost of blood and treasure, falling to pieces in every direction; leaving the dynasties which it had restored, hastening into exile; leaving the nations which it had joined together, breaking away from each other; leaving the fundholders in dismay; leaving the peasantry in insurrection; leaving the most fertile counties lighted up with the fires of incendiaries; leaving the capital in such a state, that a royal procession could not pass safely though it. Dark and terrible, beyond any season within my remembrance of political affairs, was the day of their flight. Far darker and far more terrible will be the day of their return. They will return in opposition to the whole British nation, united as it was never before united on any internal question; united as firmly as when the Armada was sailing up the Channel; united as firmly as when Bonaparte pitched his camp on the cliffs of Boulogne. They will return pledged to defend evils which the people are resolved to destroy. They will return to a situation in which they can stand only by crushing and trampling down public opinion, and from which, if they fall, they may, in their fall, drag down with them the whole frame of society. Against such evils, should such evils appear to threaten the country, it will be our privilege and our duty to warn our gracious and beloved Sovereign. It will be our privilege and our duty to convey the wishes of a loyal people to the throne of a patriot king. At such a crisis the proper place for the House of Commons is in front of the nation; and in that place this House will assuredly be found. Whatever prejudice or weakness may do elsewhere to ruin the empire, here, I trust, will not be wanting the wisdom, the virtue, and the energy that may save it,

A SPEECH

DELIVERED IN THE HOUSE OF COMMONS ON THE 10TH OF OCTOBER, 1831.

On the morning of Saturday, the eighth of October, 1831, the House of Lords, by a majority of 190 to 158, rejected the Reform Bill. On the Monday following, Lord Ebrington, member for Devonshire, moved the following resolution in the House of Commons:

"That while this House deeply laments the present fate of a bill for amending the representation of the people in England and Wales, in favour of which the opinion of the country stands unequivocally pronounced, and which has been matured by discussions the most anxious and laborious, it feels itself called upon to reassert its firm adherence to the principle and leading provisions of that great measure, and to express its unabated confidence in the integrity, perseverance, and ability of those Ministers, who, in introducing and conducting it, have so well consulted the best interests of the country."

The resolution was carried by 329 votes to 198. The following speech was made early in the debate.

I DOUBT, Sir, whether any person who had merely heard the speech of the right honourable Member for the University of Cambridge* would have been able to conjecture what the question is which we are discussing, and what the occasion on which we are assembled. For myself, I can with perfect certainty declare that never in the whole course of my life did I feel my mind oppressed by so deep and solemn a sense of responsibility as at the present moment. I firmly believe that the country is now in danger of calamities greater than ever threatened it, from domestic misgovernment or from foreign hostility. The danger is no less than this, that there may be a complete alienation of the people from their rulers. To soothe the public mind, to reconcile the people to the delay, the short delay, which must intervene before their wishes can be legitimately gratified, and in the meantime to avert civil discord, and to uphold the authority of law, these are, I conceive, the objects of my noble friend, the Member for Devonshire: these ought, at the present crisis, to be the objects of every honest Englishman. They are objects which will assuredly be attained, if we rise to this great occasion, if we take our stand in the place which the Constitution has assigned to us, if we employ, with becoming firmness and dignity, the powers which belong to us as trustees of the nation, and as advisers of the Throne.

Sir, the Resolution of my noble friend consists of two parts. He calls upon us to declare our undiminished attachment to the principles of the Reform Bill, and also our undiminished confidence in His Majesty's Ministers. I consider these two declarations as identical. The question of Reform is, in my opinion, of such paramount importance, that, approving the principles of the Ministerial Bill, I must think the Ministers who have brought that bill forward, although I may differ from them on some minor points, entitled to the strongest support of Parliament. The right honourable gentleman, the Member for the University of Cambridge, has attempted to divert the course of the debate to questions comparatively unimportant. He has said much about the coal duty, about the candle duty, about the budget of the present Chancellor of the Exchequer. On most of the points to which he has referred, it would be easy for me, were I so inclined, to defend the Ministers; and where I could not defend them, I should find it easy to recriminate on those who preceded them. The right honourable Member for the University of Cambridge has taunted the Ministers with the defeat which their plan respecting the timber trade sustained in the last Parliament. I might, perhaps, at a more convenient season, be tempted to inquire whether that defeat was more disgraceful to them or to their predecessors. I might, perhaps, be tempted to ask the right honourable gentleman whether, if he had not been treated, while in office, with more fairness than he has shown while in opposition, it would have been in his power to carry his best bill, the Beer Bill? He has accused the Ministers of bringing forward financial propositions, and then withdrawing those propositions. Did not he bring forward, during the Session of 1830, a plan respecting the sugar duties? And was not that plan withdrawn? But, Sir, this is mere trifling. I will not be seduced from the matter in hand by the right honourable gentleman's example. At the present moment I can see only one question in the State, the question of Reform; only two parties, the friends of the Reform Bill and its enemies.

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* Mr Goulburn.

It is not my intention, Sir, again to discuss the merits of the Reform Bill. The principle of that bill received the approbation of the late House of Commons after a discussion of ten nights; and the bill as it now stands, after a long and most laborious investigation, passed the present House of Commons by a majority which was nearly half as large again as the minority. This was little more than a fortnight ago. Nothing has since occurred to change our opinion. The justice of the case is unaltered. The public enthusiasm is undiminished. Old Sarum has grown no larger. Manchester has grown no smaller. In addressing this House, therefore, I am entitled to assume that the bill is in itself a good bill. If so, ought we to abandon it merely because the Lords have rejected it? We ought to respect the lawful privileges of their House; but we ought also to assert our own. We are constitutionally as independent of their Lordships as their Lordships are of us. We have precisely as good a right to adhere to our opinion as they have to dissent from it. In speaking of their decision, I will attempt to follow that example of moderation which was so judiciously set by my noble friend, the Member for Devonshire. I will only say that I do not think that they are more competent to form a correct judgment on a political question than we are. It is certain that, on all the most important points on which the two Houses have for a long time past differed, the Lords have at length come over to the opinion of the Commons. I am therefore entitled to say, that with respect to all those points, the Peers themselves being judges, the House of Commons was in the right and the House of Lords in the wrong. It was thus with respect to the Slave-trade: it was thus with respect to Catholic Emancipation: it was thus with several other important questions. I, therefore, cannot think that we ought, on the present occasion, to surrender our judgment to those who have acknowledged that, on former occasions of the same kind, we have judged more correctly than they.

Then again, Sir, I cannot forget how the majority and the minority in this House were composed; I cannot forget that the majority contained almost all those gentlemen who are returned by large bodies of electors. It is, I believe, no exaggeration to say, that there were single Members of the majority who had more constituents than the whole minority put together. I speak advisedly and seriously. I believe that the number of freeholders of Yorkshire exceeds that of all the electors who return the Opposition. I cannot with propriety comment here on any reports which may have been circulated concerning the majority and minority in the House of Lords. I may, however, mention these notoriously historical facts; that during the last forty years the powers of the executive Government have been, almost without intermission, exercised by a party opposed to Reform; and that a very great number of Peers have been created, and all the present Bishops raised to the bench during those years. On this question, therefore, while I feel more than usual respect for the judgment of the House of Commons, I feel less than usual respect for the judgment of the House of Lords. Our decision is the decision of the nation; the decision of their Lordships can scarcely be considered as the decision even of that class from which the Peers are generally selected, and of which they may be considered as virtual representatives, the great landed gentlemen of England. It seems to me clear, therefore, that we ought, notwithstanding what has passed in the other House, to adhere to our opinion concerning the Reform Bill.

The next question is this; ought we to make a formal declaration that we adhere to our opinion? I think that we ought to make such a declaration; and I am sure that we cannot make it in more temperate or more constitutional terms than those which my noble friend asks us to adopt. I support the Resolution which he has proposed with all my heart and soul: I support it as a friend to Reform; but I support it still more as a friend to law, to property, to social order. No observant and unprejudiced man can look forward without great alarm to the effects which the recent decision of the Lords may possibly produce. I do not predict, I do not expect, open, armed insurrection. What I apprehend is this, that the people may engage in a silent, but extensive and persevering war against the law. What I apprehend is, that England may exhibit the same spectacle which Ireland exhibited three years ago, agitators stronger than the magistrate, associations stronger than the law, a Government powerful enough to be hated, and not powerful enough to be feared, a people bent on indemnifying themselves by illegal excesses for the want of legal privileges. I fear, that we may before long see the tribunals defied, the tax-gatherer resisted, public credit shaken, property insecure, the whole frame of society hastening to dissolution. It is easy to say, "Be bold, be firm: defy intimidation: let the law have its course: the law is strong enough to put down the seditious." Sir, we have heard all this blustering before; and we know in what it ended. It is the blustering of little men whose lot has fallen on a great crisis. Xerxes scourging the winds, Canute commanding the waves to recede from his footstool, were but types of the folly of those who apply the maxims of the Quarter Sessions to the great convulsions of society. The law has no eyes: the law has no hands: the law is nothing, nothing but a piece of paper printed by the King's printer, with the King's arms at the top, till public opinion breathes the breath of life into the dead letter. We found this in Ireland. The Catholic Association bearded the Government. The Government resolved to put down the Association. An indictment was brought against my honourable and learned friend, the Member for Kerry. The Grand Jury threw it out. Parliament met. The Lords Commissioners came down with a speech recommending the suppression of the self-constituted legislature of Dublin. A bill was brought in: it passed both Houses by large majorities: it received the Royal assent. And what effect did it produce? Exactly as much as that old Act of Queen Elizabeth, still unrepealed, by which it is provided that every man who, without a special exemption, shall eat meat on Fridays and Saturdays, shall pay a fine of twenty shillings or go to prison for a month. Not only was the Association not destroyed: its power was not for one day suspended: it flourished and waxed strong under the law which had been made for the purpose of annihilating it. The elections of 1826, the Clare election two years later, proved the folly of those who think that nations are governed by wax and parchment: and, at length, in the close of 1828, the Government had only one plain choice before it, concession or civil war. Sir, I firmly believe that, if the people of England shall lose all hope of carrying the Reform Bill by constitutional means, they will forthwith begin to offer to the Government the same kind of resistance which was offered to the late Government, three years ago, by the people of Ireland, a resistance by no means amounting to rebellion, a resistance rarely amounting to any crime defined by the law, but a resistance nevertheless which is quite sufficient to obstruct the course of justice, to disturb the pursuits of industry, and to prevent the accumulation of wealth. And is not this a danger which we ought to fear? And is not this a danger which we are bound, by all means in our power, to avert? And who are those who taunt us for yielding to intimidation? Who are those who affect to speak with contempt of associations, and agitators, and public meetings? Even the very persons who, scarce two years ago, gave up to associations, and agitators, and public meetings, their boasted Protestant Constitution, proclaiming all the time that they saw the evils of Catholic Emancipation as strongly as ever. Surely, surely, the note of defiance which is now so loudly sounded in our ears, proceeds with a peculiarly bad grace from men whose highest glory it is that they abased themselves to the dust before a people whom their policy had driven to madness, from men the proudest moment of whose lives was that in which they appeared in the character of persecutors scared into toleration. Do they mean to indemnify themselves for the humiliation of quailing before the people of Ireland by trampling on the people of England? If so, they deceive themselves. The case of Ireland, though a strong one, was by no means so strong a case as that with which we have now to deal. The Government, in its struggle with the Catholics of Ireland, had Great Britain at its back. Whom will it have at its back in the struggle with the Reformers of Great Britain? I know only two ways in which societies can permanently be governed, by public opinion, and by the sword. A Government having at its command the armies, the fleets, and the revenues of Great Britain, might possibly hold Ireland by the sword. So Oliver Cromwell held Ireland; so William the Third held it; so Mr Pitt held it; so the Duke of Wellington might perhaps have held it. But to govern Great Britain by the sword! So wild a thought has never, I will venture to say, occurred to any public man of any party; and, if any man were frantic enough to make the attempt, he would find, before three days had expired, that there is no better sword than that which is fashioned out of a ploughshare. But, if not by the sword, how is the country to be governed? I understand how the peace is kept at New York. It is by the assent and support of the people. I understand also how the peace is kept at Milan. It is by the bayonets of the Austrian soldiers. But how the peace is to be kept when you have neither the popular assent nor the military force, how the peace is to be kept in England by a Government acting on the principles of the present Opposition, I do not understand.

There is in truth a great anomaly in the relation between the English people and their Government. Our institutions are either too popular or not popular enough. The people have not sufficient power in making the laws; but they have quite sufficient power to impede the execution of the laws when made. The Legislature is almost entirely aristocratical; the machinery by which the degrees of the Legislature are carried into effect is almost entirely popular; and, therefore, we constantly see all the power which ought to execute the law, employed to counteract the law. Thus, for example, with a criminal code which carries its rigour to the length of atrocity, we have a criminal judicature which often carries its lenity to the length of perjury. Our law of libel is the most absurdly severe that ever existed, so absurdly severe that, if it were carried into full effect, it would be much more oppressive than a censorship. And yet, with this severe law of libel, we have a press which practically is as free as the air. In 1819 the Ministers complained of the alarming increase of seditious and blasphemous publications. They proposed a bill of great rigour to stop the growth of the evil; and they carried their bill. It was enacted, that the publisher of a seditious libel might, on a second conviction, be banished, and that if he should return from banishment, he might be transported. How often was this law put in force? Not once. Last year we repealed it: but it was already dead, or rather it was dead born. It was obsolete before *Le Roi le veut* had been pronounced over it. For any effect which it produced it might as well have been in the Code Napoleon as in the English Statute Book. And why did the Government, having solicited and procured so sharp and weighty a weapon, straightway hang it up to rust? Was there less sedition, were there fewer libels, after the passing of the Act than before it? Sir, the very next year was the year 1820, the year of the Bill of Pains and Penalties against Queen Caroline, the very year when the public mind was most excited, the very year when the public press was most scurrilous. Why then did not the Ministers use their new law? Because they durst not: because they could not. They had obtained it with ease; for in obtaining it they had to deal with a subservient Parliament. They could not execute it: for in executing it they would have to deal with a refractory people. These are instances of the difficulty of carrying the law into effect when the people are inclined to thwart their rulers. The great anomaly, or, to speak more properly, the great evil which I have described, would, I believe, be removed by the Reform Bill. That bill would establish harmony between the people and the Legislature. It would give a fair share in the making of laws to those without whose co-operation laws are mere waste paper. Under a reformed system we should not see, as we now often see, the nation repealing Acts of Parliament as fast as we and the Lords can pass them. As I believe that the Reform Bill would produce this blessed and salutary concord, so I fear that the rejection of the Reform Bill, if that rejection should be considered as final, will aggravate the evil which I have been describing to an unprecedented, to a terrible extent. To all the laws which might be passed for the collection of the revenue, or for the prevention of sedition, the people would oppose the same kind of resistance by means of which they have succeeded in mitigating, I might say in abrogating, the law of libel. There would be so many offenders that the Government would scarcely know at whom to aim its blow. Every offender would have so many accomplices and protectors that the blow would almost always miss the aim. The Veto of the people, a Veto not pronounced in set form like that of the Roman Tribunes, but quite as effectual as that of the Roman Tribunes for the purpose of impeding public measures, would meet the Government at every turn. The administration would be unable to preserve order at home, or to uphold the national honour abroad; and, at length, men who are now moderate, who now think of revolution with horror, would begin to wish that the lingering agony of the State might be terminated by one fierce, sharp, decisive crisis.

Is there a way of escape from these calamities? I believe that there is. I believe that, if we do our duty, if we give the people reason to believe that the accomplishment of their wishes is only deferred, if we declare our undiminished attachment to the Reform Bill, and our resolution to support no Minister who will not support that bill, we shall avert the fearful disasters which impend over the country. There is danger that, at this conjuncture, men of more zeal than wisdom may obtain a fatal influence over the public mind. With these men will be joined others, who have neither zeal nor wisdom, common barrators in politics, dregs of society which, in times of violent agitation, are tossed up from the bottom to the top, and which, in quiet times, sink again from the top to their natural place at the bottom. To these men nothing is so hateful as the prospect of a reconciliation between the orders of the State. A crisis like that which now makes every honest citizen sad and anxious fills these men with joy, and with a detestable hope. And how is it that such men, formed by nature and education to be objects of mere contempt, can ever inspire terror? How is it that such men, without talents or acquirements sufficient for the management of a vestry, sometimes become dangerous to great empires? The secret of their power lies in the indolence or faithlessness of those who ought to take the lead in the redress of public grievances. The whole history of low traders in sedition is contained in that fine old Hebrew fable which we have all read in the Book of Judges. The trees meet to choose a king. The vine, and the fig tree, and the olive tree decline the office. Then it is that the sovereignty of the forest devolves upon the bramble: then it is that from a base and noxious shrub goes forth the fire which devours the cedars of Lebanon. Let us be instructed. If we are afraid of Political Unions and Reform Associations, let the House of Commons become the chief point of political union: let the House of Commons be the great Reform Association. If we are afraid that the people may attempt to accomplish their wishes by unlawful means, let us give them a solemn pledge that we will use in their cause all our high and ancient privileges, so often victorious in old conflicts with tyranny; those privileges which our ancestors invoked, not in vain, on the day when a faithless king filled our house with his guards, took his seat, Sir, on your chair, and saw your predecessor kneeling on the floor before him. The Constitution of England, thank God, is not one of those constitutions which are past all repair, and which must, for the public welfare, be utterly destroyed. It has a decayed part; but it has also a sound and precious part. It requires purification; but it contains within itself the means by which that purification may be effected. We read that in old times, when the villeins were driven to revolt by oppression, when the castles of the nobility were burned to the ground, when the warehouses of London were pillaged, when a hundred thousand insurgents appeared in arms on Blackheath, when a foul murder perpetrated in their presence had raised their passions to madness, when they were looking round for some captain to succeed and avenge him whom they had lost, just then, before Hob Miller, or Tom Carter, or Jack Straw, could place himself at their head, the King rode up to them and exclaimed, "I will be your leader!" and at once the infuriated multitude laid down their arms, submitted to his guidance, dispersed at his command. Herein let us imitate him. Our countrymen are, I fear, at this moment, but too much disposed to lend a credulous ear to selfish impostors. Let us say to them, "We are your leaders; we, your own house of Commons; we, the constitutional interpreters of your wishes; the knights of forty English shires, the citizens and burgesses of all your largest towns. Our lawful power shall be firmly exerted to the utmost in your cause; and our lawful power is such, that when firmly exerted in your cause, it must finally prevail." This tone it is our interest and our duty to take. The circumstances admit of no delay. Is there one among us who is not looking with breathless anxiety for the next tidings which may arrive from the remote parts of the kingdom? Even while I speak, the moments are passing away, the irrevocable moments pregnant with the destiny of a great people. The country is in danger: it may be saved: we can save it: this is the way: this is the time. In our hands are the issues of great good and great evil, the issues of the life and death of the State. May the result of our deliberations be the repose and prosperity of that noble country which is entitled to all our love; and for the safety of which we are answerable to our own consciences, to the memory of future ages, to the Judge of all hearts!

A SPEECH

DELIVERED IN THE HOUSE OF COMMONS ON THE 16TH OF DECEMBER 1831.

On Friday, the sixteenth of December 1831, Lord Althorpe moved the second reading of the Bill to amend the representation of the people in England and Wales. Lord Porchester moved, as an amendment, that the bill should be read a second time that day six months. The debate lasted till after midnight, and was then adjourned till twelve at noon. The House did not divide till one on the Sunday morning. The amendment was then rejected by 324 votes to 162; and the original motion was carried. The following Speech was made on the first night of the debate.

I CAN assure my noble friend,* for whom I entertain sentiments of respect and kindness which no political difference will, I trust, ever disturb, that his remarks have given me no pain, except, indeed, the pain which I feel at being compelled to say a few words about myself. Those words shall be very few. I know how unpopular egotism is in this House. My noble friend says that, in the debates of last March, I declared myself opposed to the ballot, and that I have since recanted, for the purpose of making myself popular with the inhabitants of Leeds. My noble friend is altogether mistaken. I never said, in any debate, that I was opposed to the ballot. The word ballot never passed my lips within this House. I observed strict silence respecting it on two accounts; in the first place, because my own opinions were, till very lately, undecided; in the second place, because I knew that the agitation of that question, a question of which the importance appears to me to be greatly overrated, would divide those on whose firm and cordial union the safety of the empire depends. My noble friend has taken this opportunity of replying to a speech which I made last October. The doctrines which I then laid down were, according to him, most intemperate and dangerous. Now, Sir, it happens, curiously enough, that my noble friend has himself asserted, in his speech of this night, those very doctrines, in language so nearly resembling mine that I might fairly accuse him of plagiarism. I said that laws have no force in themselves, and that, unless supported by public opinion, they are a mere dead letter. The noble Lord has said exactly the same thing to-night. "Keep your old Constitution," he exclaims; "for, whatever may be its defects in theory, it has more of the public veneration than your new Constitution will have; and no laws can be efficient, unless they have the public veneration." I said, that statutes are in themselves only wax and parchment; and I was called an incendiary by the opposition. The noble Lord has said to-night that statutes in themselves are only ink and parchment; and those very persons who reviled me have enthusiastically cheered him. I am quite at a loss to understand how doctrines which are, in his mouth, true and constitutional, can, in mine, be false and revolutionary.

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* Lord Mahon.

But, Sir, it is time that I should address myself to the momentous question before us. I shall certainly give my best support to this bill, through all its stages; and, in so doing, I conceive that I shall act in strict conformity with the resolution by which this House, towards the close of the late Session, declared its unabated attachment to the principles and to the leading provisions of the First Reform Bill. All those principles, all those leading provisions, I find in the present measure. In the details there are, undoubtedly, considerable alterations. Most of the alterations appear to me to be improvements; and even those alterations which I cannot consider as in themselves improvements will yet be most useful, if their effect shall be to conciliate opponents, and to facilitate the adjustment of a question which, for the sake of order, for the sake of peace, for the sake of trade, ought to be, not only satisfactorily, but speedily settled. We have been told, Sir, that, if we pronounce this bill to be a better bill than the last, we recant all the doctrines which we maintained during the last Session; we sing our palinode; we allow that we have had a great escape; we allow that our own conduct was deserving of censure; we allow that the party which was the minority in this House, and, most unhappily for the country, the majority in the other House, has saved the country from a great calamity. Sir, even if this charge were well founded, there are those who should have been prevented by prudence, if not by magnanimity, from bringing it forward. I remember an Opposition which took a very different course. I remember an Opposition which, while excluded from power, taught all its doctrines to the Government; which, after labouring long, and sacrificing much, in order to effect improvements in various parts of our political and commercial system, saw the honour of those improvements appropriated by others. But the members of that Opposition had, I believe, a sincere desire to promote the public good. They, therefore, raised no shout of triumph over the recantations of their proselytes. They rejoiced, but with no ungenerous joy, when their principles of trade, of jurisprudence, of foreign policy, of religious liberty, became the principles of the Administration. They were content that he who came into fellowship with them at the eleventh hour should have a far larger share of the reward than those who had borne the burthen and heat of the day. In the year 1828, a single division in this House changed the whole policy of the Government with respect to the Test and Corporation Acts. My noble friend, the Paymaster of the Forces, then sat where the right honourable Baronet, the member for Tamworth, now sits. I do not remember that, when the right honourable Baronet announced his change of purpose, my noble friend sprang up to talk about palinodes, to magnify the wisdom and virtue of the Whigs, and to sneer at his new coadjutors. Indeed, I am not sure that the members of the late Opposition did not carry their indulgence too far; that they did not too easily suffer the fame of Grattan and Romilly to be transferred to less deserving claimants; that they were not too ready, in the joy with which they welcomed the tardy and convenient repentance of their converts, to grant a general amnesty for the errors or the insincerity of years. If it were true that we had recanted, this ought not to be made matter of charge against us by men whom posterity will remember by nothing but recantations. But, in truth, we recant nothing. We have nothing to recant. We support this bill. We may possibly think it a better bill than that which preceded it. But are we therefore bound to admit that we were in the wrong, that the Opposition was in the right, that the House of Lords has conferred a great benefit on the nation? We saw—who did not see?—great defects in the first bill. But did we see nothing else? Is delay no evil? Is prolonged excitement no evil? Is it no evil that the heart of a great people should be made sick by deferred hope? We allow that many of the changes which have been made are improvements. But we think that it would have been far better for the country to have had the last bill, with all its defects, than the present bill, with all its improvements. Second thoughts are proverbially the best, but there are emergencies which do not admit of second thoughts. There probably never was a law which might not have been amended by delay. But there have been many cases in which there would have been more mischief in the delay than benefit in the amendments. The first bill, however inferior it may have been in its details to the present bill, was yet herein far superior to the present bill, that it was the first. If the first bill had passed, it would, I firmly believe, have produced a complete reconciliation between the aristocracy and the people. It is my earnest wish and prayer that the present bill may produce this blessed effect; but I cannot say that my hopes are so sanguine as they were at the beginning of the last Session. The decision of the House of Lords has, I fear, excited in the public mind feelings of resentment which will not soon be allayed. What then, it is said, would you legislate in haste? Would you legislate in times of great excitement concerning matters of such deep concern? Yes, Sir, I would: and if any bad consequences should follow from the haste and the excitement, let those be held answerable who, when there was no need of haste, when there existed no excitement, refused to listen to any project of Reform, nay, who made it an argument against Reform, that the public mind was not excited. When few meetings were held, when few petitions were sent up to us, these politicians said, "Would you alter a Constitution with which the people are perfectly satisfied?" And now, when the kingdom from one end to the other is convulsed by the question of Reform, we hear it said by the very same persons, "Would you alter the Representative system in such agitated times as these?" Half the logic of misgovernment lies in this one sophistical dilemma: If the people are turbulent, they are unfit for liberty: if they are quiet, they do not want liberty.

I allow that hasty legislation is an evil. I allow that there are great objections to legislating in troubled times. But reformers are compelled to legislate fast, because bigots will not legislate early. Reformers are compelled to legislate in times of excitement, because bigots will not legislate in times of tranquillity. If, ten years ago, nay, if only two years ago, there had been at the head of affairs men who understood the signs of the times and the temper of the nation, we should not have been forced to hurry now. If we cannot take our time, it is because we have to make up for their lost time. If they had reformed gradually, we might have reformed gradually; but we are compelled to move fast, because they would not move at all.

Though I admit, Sir, that this bill is in its details superior to the former bill, I must say that the best parts of this bill, those parts for the sake of which principally I support it, those parts for the sake of which I would support it, however imperfect its details might be, are parts which it has in common with the former bill. It destroys nomination; it admits the great body of the middle orders to a share in the government; and it contains provisions which will, as I conceive, greatly diminish the expense of elections.

Touching the expense of elections I will say a few words, because that part of the subject has not, I think, received so much attention as it deserves. Whenever the nomination boroughs are attacked, the opponents of Reform produce a long list of eminent men who have sate for those boroughs, and who, they tell us, would never have taken any part in public affairs but for those boroughs. Now, Sir, I suppose no person will maintain that a large constituent body is likely to prefer ignorant and incapable men to men of information and ability? Whatever objections there may be to democratic institutions, it was never, I believe, doubted that those institutions are favourable to the development of talents. We may prefer the constitution of Sparta to that of Athens, or the constitution of Venice to that of Florence: but no person will deny that Athens produced more great men than Sparta, or that Florence produced more great men than Venice. But to come nearer home: the five largest English towns which have now the right of returning two members each by popular election, are Westminster, Southwark, Liverpool, Bristol, and Norwich. Now let us see what members those places have sent to Parliament. I will not speak of the living, though among the living are some of the most distinguished ornaments of the House. I will confine myself to the dead. Among many respectable and useful members of Parliament, whom these towns have returned, during the last half century, I find Mr Burke, Mr Fox, Mr Sheridan, Mr Windham, Mr Tierney, Sir Samuel Romilly, Mr Canning, Mr Huskisson. These were eight of the most illustrious parliamentary leaders of the generation which is passing away from the world. Mr Pitt was, perhaps, the only person worthy to make a ninth with them. It is, surely, a remarkable circumstance that, of the nine most distinguished Members of the House of Commons who have died within the last forty years, eight should have been returned to Parliament by the five largest represented towns. I am, therefore, warranted in saying that great constituent bodies are quite as competent to discern merit, and quite as much disposed to reward merit, as the proprietors of boroughs. It is true that some of the distinguished statesmen whom I have mentioned would never have been known to large constituent bodies if they had not first sate for nomination boroughs. But why is this? Simply, because the expense of contesting popular places, under the present system, is ruinously great. A poor man cannot defray it; an untried man cannot expect his constituents to defray it for him. And this is the way in which our Representative system is defended. Corruption vouches corruption. Every abuse is made the plea for another abuse. We must have nomination at Gatton because we have profusion at Liverpool. Sir, these arguments convince me, not that no Reform is required, but that a very deep and searching Reform is required. If two evils serve in some respects to counterbalance each other, this is a reason, not for keeping both, but for getting rid of both together. At present you close against men of talents that broad, that noble entrance which belongs to them, and which ought to stand wide open to them; and in exchange you open to them a bye entrance, low and narrow, always obscure, often filthy, through which, too often, they can pass only by crawling on their hands and knees, and from which they too often emerge sullied with stains never to be washed away. But take the most favourable case. Suppose that the member who sits for a nomination borough owes his seat to a man of virtue and honour, to a man whose service is perfect freedom, to a man who would think himself degraded by any proof of gratitude which might degrade his nominee. Yet is it nothing that such a member comes into this House wearing the badge, though not feeling the chain of servitude? Is it nothing that he cannot speak of his independence without exciting a smile? Is it nothing that he is considered, not as a Representative, but as an adventurer? This is what your system does for men of genius. It admits them to political power, not as, under better institutions, they would be admitted to power, erect, independent, unsullied; but by means which corrupt the virtue of many, and in some degree diminish the authority of all. Could any system be devised, better fitted to pervert the principles and break the spirit of men formed to be the glory of their country? And, can we mention no instance in which this system has made such men useless, or worse than useless, to the country of which their talents were the ornament, and might, in happier circumstances, have been the salvation? Ariel, the beautiful and kindly Ariel, doing the bidding of the loathsome and malignant Sycorax, is but a faint type of genius enslaved by the spells, and employed in the drudgery of corruption—

> "A spirit too delicate
> To act those earthy and abhorred commands."

We cannot do a greater service to men of real merit than by destroying that which has been called their refuge, which is their house of bondage; by taking from them the patronage of the great, and giving to them in its stead the respect and confidence of the people. The bill now before us will, I believe, produce that happy effect. It facilitates the canvass; it reduces the expense of legal agency; it shortens the poll; above all, it disfranchises the outvoters. It is not easy to calculate the precise extent to which these changes will diminish the cost of elections. I have attempted, however, to obtain some information on this subject. I have applied to a gentleman of great experience in affairs of this kind, a gentleman who, at the last three general elections, managed the finances of the popular party in one of the largest boroughs in the kingdom. He tells me, that at the general election of 1826, when that borough was contested, the expenses of the popular candidate amounted to eighteen thousand pounds; and that, by the best estimate which can now be made, the borough may, under the reformed system, be as effectually contested for one tenth part of that sum. In the new constituent bodies there are no ancient rights reserved. In those bodies, therefore, the expense of an election will be still smaller. I firmly believe, that it will be possible to poll out Manchester for less than the market price of Old Sarum.

Sir, I have, from the beginning of these discussions, supported Reform on two grounds; first, because I believe it to be in itself a good thing; and secondly, because I think the dangers of withholding it so great that, even if it were an evil, it would be the less of two evils. The dangers of the country have in no wise diminished. I believe that they have greatly increased. It is, I fear, impossible to deny that what has happened with respect to almost every great question that ever divided mankind has happened also with respect to the Reform Bill. Wherever great interests are at stake there will be much excitement; and wherever there is much excitement there will be some extravagance. The same great stirring of the human mind which produced the Reformation produced also the follies and crimes of the Anabaptists. The same spirit which resisted the Ship-money, and abolished the Star Chamber, produced the Levellers and the Fifth Monarchy men. And so, it cannot be denied that bad men, availing themselves of the agitation produced by the question of Reform, have promulgated, and promulgated with some success, doctrines incompatible with the existence, I do not say of monarchy, or of aristocracy, but of all law, of all order, of all property, of all civilisation, of all that makes us to differ from Mohawks or Hottentots. I bring no accusation against that portion of the working classes which has been imposed upon by these doctrines. Those persons are what their situation has made them, ignorant from want of leisure, irritable from the sense of distress. That they should be deluded by impudent assertions and gross sophisms; that, suffering cruel privations, they should give ready credence to promises of relief; that, never having investigated the nature and operation of government, they should expect impossibilities from it, and should reproach it for not performing impossibilities; all this is perfectly natural. No errors which they may commit ought ever to make us forget that it is in all probability owing solely to the accident of our situation that we have not fallen into errors precisely similar. There are few of us who do not know from experience that, even with all our advantages of education, pain and sorrow can make us very querulous and very unreasonable. We ought not, therefore, to be surprised that, as the Scotch proverb says, "it should be ill talking between a full man and a fasting;" that the logic of the rich man who vindicates the rights of property, should seem very inconclusive to the poor man who hears his children cry for bread. I bring, I say, no accusation against the working classes. I would withhold from them nothing which it might be for their good to possess. I see with pleasure that, by the provisions of the Reform Bill, the most industrious and respectable of our labourers will be admitted to a share in the government of the State. If I would refuse to the working people that larger share of power which some of them have demanded, I would refuse it, because I am convinced that, by giving it, I should only increase their distress. I admit that the end of government is their happiness. But, that they may be governed for their happiness, they must not be governed according to the doctrines which they have learned from their illiterate, incapable, low-minded flatterers.

But, Sir, the fact that such doctrines have been promulgated among the multitude is a strong argument for a speedy and effectual reform. That government is attacked is a reason for making the foundations of government broader, and deeper, and more solid. That property is attacked is a reason for binding together all proprietors in the firmest union. That the agitation of the question of Reform has enabled worthless demagogues to propagate their notions with some success is a reason for speedily settling the question in the only way in which it can be settled. It is difficult, Sir, to conceive any spectacle more alarming than that which presents itself to us, when we look at the two extreme parties in this country; a narrow oligarchy above; an infuriated multitude below; on the one side the vices engendered by power; on the other side the vices engendered by distress; one party blindly averse to improvement; the other party blindly clamouring for destruction; one party ascribing to political abuses the sanctity of property; the other party crying out against property as a political abuse. Both these parties are alike ignorant of their true interest. God forbid that the state should ever be at the mercy of either, or should ever experience the calamities which must result from a collision between them! I anticipate no such horrible event. For, between those two parties stands a third party, infinitely more powerful than both the others put together, attacked by both, vilified by both, but destined, I trust, to save both from the fatal effects of their own folly. To that party I have never ceased, through all the vicissitudes of public affairs, to look with confidence and with a good hope. I speak of that great party which zealously and steadily supported the first Reform Bill, and which will, I have no doubt, support the second Reform Bill with equal steadiness and equal zeal. That party is the middle class of England, with the flower of the aristocracy at its head, and the flower of the working classes bringing up its rear. That great party has taken its immovable stand between the enemies of all order and the enemies of all liberty. It will have Reform : it will not have revolution : it will destroy political abuses : it will not suffer the rights of property to be assailed : it will preserve, in spite of themselves, those who are assailing it, from the right and from the left, with contradictory accusations : it will be a daysman between them : it will lay its hand upon them both : it will not suffer them to tear each other in pieces. While that great party continues unbroken, as it now is unbroken, I shall not relinquish the hope that this great contest may be conducted, by lawful means, to a happy termination. But, of this I am assured, that by means, lawful or unlawful, to a termination, happy or unhappy, this contest must speedily come. All that I know of the history of past times, all the observations that I have been able to make on the present state of the country, have convinced me that the time has arrived when a great concession must be made to the democracy of England ; that the question, whether the change be in itself good or bad, has become a question of secondary importance ; that, good or bad, the thing must be done ; that a law as strong as the laws of attraction and motion has decreed it.

I well know that history, when we look at it in small portions, may be so construed as to mean anything, that it may be interpreted in as many ways as a Delphic oracle. "The French Revolution," says one expositor, "was the effect of concession." "Not so," cries another : "the French Revolution was produced by the obstinacy of an arbitrary government." "If the French nobles," says the first, "had refused to sit with the Third Estate, they would never have been driven from their country." "They would never have been driven from their country," answers the other, "if they had agreed to the reforms proposed by M. Turgot." These controversies can never be brought to any decisive test, or to any satisfactory conclusion. But, as I believe that history, when we look at it in small fragments, proves anything, or nothing, so I believe that it is full of useful and precious instruction when we contemplate it in large portions, when we take in, at one view, the whole lifetime of great societies. I believe that it is possible to obtain some insight into the law which regulates the growth of communities, and some knowledge of the effects which that growth produces. The history of England, in particular, is the history of a government constantly giving way, sometimes peaceably, sometimes after a violent struggle, but constantly giving way before a nation which has been constantly advancing. The forest laws, the laws of villenage, the oppressive power of the Roman Catholic Church, the power, scarcely less oppressive, which, during some time after the Reformation, was exercised by the Protestant Establishment, the prerogatives of the Crown, the censorship of the Press, successively yielded. The abuses of the representative system are now yielding to the same irresistible force. It was impossible for the Stuarts, and it would have been impossible for them if they had possessed all the energy of Richelieu, and all the craft of Mazarin, to govern England as England had been governed by the Tudors. It was impossible for the princes of the House of Hanover to govern England as England had been governed by the Stuarts. And so it is impossible that England should be any longer governed as it was governed under the four first princes of the House of Hanover. I say impossible. I believe that over the great changes of the moral world we possess as little power as over the great changes of the physical world. We can no more prevent time from changing the distribution of property and of intelligence, we can no more prevent property and intelligence from aspiring to political power, than we can change the courses of the seasons and of the tides. In peace or in tumult, by means of old institutions, where those institutions are flexible, over the ruins of old institutions, where those institutions oppose an unbending resistance, the great march of society proceeds, and must proceed. The feeble efforts of individuals to bear back are lost and swept away in the mighty rush with which the species goes onward. Those who appear to lead the movement are, in fact, only whirled along before it; those who attempt to resist it, are beaten down and crushed beneath it.

It is because rulers do not pay sufficient attention to the stages of this great movement, because they underrate its force, because they are ignorant of its law, that so many violent and fearful revolutions have changed the face of society. We have heard it said a hundred times during these discussions, we have heard it said repeatedly in the course of this very debate, that the people of England are more free than ever they were, that the Government is more democratic than ever it was; and this is urged as an argument against Reform. I admit the fact; but I deny the inference. It is a principle never to be forgotten, in discussions like this, that it is not by absolute, but by relative misgovernment that nations are roused to madness. It is not sufficient to look merely at the form of government. We must look also to the state of the public mind. The worst tyrant that ever had his neck wrung in modern Europe might have passed for a paragon of clemency in Persia or Morocco. Our Indian subjects submit patiently to a monopoly of salt. We tried a stamp duty, a duty so light as to be scarcely perceptible, on the fierce breed of the old Puritans; and we lost an empire. The Government of Louis the Sixteenth was certainly a much better and milder Government than that of Louis the Fourteenth; yet Louis the Fourteenth was admired, and even loved, by his people. Louis the Sixteenth died on the scaffold. Why? Because, though the Government had made many steps in the career of improvement, it had not advanced so rapidly as the nation. Look at our own history. The liberties of the people were at least as much respected by Charles the First as by Henry the Eighth, by James the Second as by Edward the Sixth. But did this save the crown of James the Second? Did this save the head of Charles the First? Every person who knows the history of our civil dissensions knows that all those arguments which are now employed by the opponents of the Reform Bill might have been employed, and were actually employed, by the unfortunate Stuarts. The reasoning of Charles, and of all his apologists, runs thus:—"What new grievance does the nation suffer? What has the King done more than what Henry did? more than what Elizabeth did? Did the people ever enjoy more freedom than at present? Did they ever enjoy so much freedom?" But what would a wise and honest counsellor, if Charles had been so happy as to possess such a counsellor, have replied to arguments like these? He would have said, "Sir, I acknowledge that the people were never more free than under your government. I acknowledge that those who talk of restoring the old Constitution of England use an improper expression. I acknowledge that there has been a constant improvement during those very years during which many persons imagine that there has been a constant deterioration. But, though there has been no change in the government for the worse, there has been a change in the public mind which produces exactly the same effect which would be produced by a change in the government for the worse. Perhaps this change in the public mind is to be regretted. But no matter; you cannot reverse it. You cannot undo all that eighty eventful years have done. You cannot transform the Englishmen of 1640 into the Englishmen of 1560. It may be that the simple loyalty of our fathers was preferable to that inquiring, censuring, resisting spirit which is now abroad. It may be that the times when men paid their benevolences cheerfully were better times than these, when a gentleman goes before the Exchequer Chamber to resist an assessment of twenty shillings. And so it may be that infancy is a happier time than manhood, and manhood than old age. But God has decreed that old age shall succeed to manhood, and manhood to infancy. Even so have societies their law of growth. As their strength becomes greater, as their experience becomes more extensive, you can no longer confine them within the swaddling bands, or lull them in the cradles, or amuse them with the rattles, or terrify them with the bugbears of their infancy. I do not say that they are better or happier than they were; but this I say, that they are different from what they were, that you cannot again make them what they were, and that you cannot safely treat them as if they continued to be what they were." This was the advice which a wise and honest Minister would have given to Charles the First. These were the principles on which that unhappy prince should have acted. But no. He would govern, I do not say ill, I do not say tyrannically; I only say this; he would govern the men of the seventeenth century as if they had been the men of the sixteenth century; and therefore it was, that all his talents and all his virtues did not save him from unpopularity, from civil war, from a prison, from a bar, from a scaffold. These things are written for our instruction. Another great intellectual revolution has taken place; our lot has been cast on a time analogous, in many respects, to the time which immediately preceded the meeting of the Long Parliament. There is a change in society. There must be a corresponding change in the government. We are not, we cannot, in the nature of things, be, what our fathers were. We are no more like the men of the American war, or the men of the gagging bills, than the men who cried "privilege" round the coach of Charles the First were like the men who changed their religion once a year at the bidding of Henry the Eighth. That there is such a change, I can no more doubt than I can doubt that we have more power looms, more steam engines, more gas lights, than our ancestors. That there is such a change, the Minister will surely find who shall attempt to fit the yoke of Mr Pitt to the necks of the Englishmen of the nineteenth century. What then can you do to bring back those times when the constitution of this House was an object of veneration to the people? Even as much as Strafford and Laud could do to bring back the days of the Tudors; as much as Bonner and Gardiner could do to bring back the days of Hildebrand; as much as Villèle and Polignac could do to bring back the days of Louis the Fourteenth. You may make the change tedious; you may make it violent; you may—God in his mercy forbid!—you may make it bloody; but avert it you cannot. Agitations of the public mind, so deep and so long continued as those which we have witnessed, do not end in nothing. In peace or in convulsion, by the law, or in spite of the law, through the Parliament, or over the Parliament, Reform must be carried. Therefore be content to guide that movement which you cannot stop. Fling wide the gates to that force which else will enter through the breach. Then will it still be, as it has hitherto been, the peculiar glory of our Constitution that, though not exempt from the decay which is wrought by the vicissitudes of fortune, and the lapse of time, in all the proudest works of human power and wisdom, it yet contains within it the means of self-reparation. Then will England add to her manifold titles of glory this, the noblest and the purest of all; that every blessing which other nations have been forced to seek, and have too often sought in vain, by means of violent and bloody revolutions, she will have attained by a peaceful and a lawful Reform.

A SPEECH

DELIVERED IN THE HOUSE OF COMMONS ON THE 27TH OF FEBRUARY, 1832.

On Monday, the twenty-seventh of February, 1832, the House took into consideration the report of the Committee on Mr Warburton's Anatomy Bill. Mr Henry Hunt attacked that bill with great asperity. In reply to him the following Speech was made.

SIR, I cannot, even at this late hour of the night, refrain from saying two or three words. Most of the observations of the honourable Member for Preston I pass by, as undeserving of any answer before an audience like this. But on one part of his speech I must make a few remarks. We are, he says, making a law to benefit the rich, at the expense of the poor. Sir, the fact is the direct reverse. This is a bill which tends especially to the benefit of the poor. What are the evils against which we are attempting to make provision? Two especially; that is to say, the practice of Burking, and bad surgery. Now to both these the poor alone are exposed. What man, in our rank of life, runs the smallest risk of being Burked? That a man has property, that he has connections, that he is likely to be missed and sought for, are circumstances which secure him against the Burker. It is curious to observe the difference between murders of this kind and other murders. An ordinary murderer hides the body, and disposes of the property. Bishop and Williams dig holes and bury the property, and expose the body to sale. The more wretched, the more lonely, any human being may be, the more desirable prey is he to these wretches. It is the man, the mere naked man, that they pursue. Again, as to bad surgery; this is, of all evils, the evil by which the rich suffer least, and the poor most. If we could do all that in the opinion of the Member for Preston ought to be done, if we could prevent disinterment, if we could prevent dissection, if we could destroy the English school of anatomy, if we could force every student of medical science to go to the expense of a foreign education, on whom would the bad consequences fall? On the rich? Not at all. As long as there is in France, in Italy, in Germany, a single surgeon of eminent skill, a single surgeon who is, to use the phrase of the member for Preston, addicted to dissection, that surgeon will be in attendance whenever an English nobleman is to be cut for the stone. The higher orders in England will always be able to procure the best medical assistance. Who suffers by the bad state of the Russian school of surgery? The Emperor Nicholas? By no means. The whole evil falls on the peasantry. If the education of a surgeon should become very expensive, if the fees of surgeons should consequently rise, if the supply of regular surgeons should diminish, the sufferers would be, not the rich, but the poor in our country villages, who would again be left to mountebanks, and barbers, and old women, and charms and quack medicines. The honourable gentleman talks of sacrificing the interests of humanity to the interests of science, as if this were a question about the squaring of the circle, or the transit of Venus. This is not a mere question of science: it is not the unprofitable exercise of an ingenious mind: it is a question between health and sickness, between ease and torment, between life and death. Does the honourable gentleman know from what cruel sufferings the improvement of surgical science has rescued our species? I will tell him one story, the first that comes into my head. He may have heard of Leopold, Duke of Austria, the same who imprisoned our Richard Cœur-de-Lion. Leopold's horse fell under him, and crushed his leg. The surgeons said that the limb must be amputated; but none of them knew how to amputate it. Leopold, in his agony, laid a hatchet on his thigh, and ordered his servant to strike with a mallet. The leg was cut off, and the Duke died of the gush of blood. Such was the end of that powerful prince. Why, there is not now a bricklayer who falls from a ladder in England, who cannot obtain surgical assistance, infinitely superior to that which the sovereign of Austria could command in the twelfth century. I think this a bill which tends to the good of the people, and which tends especially to the good of the poor. Therefore I support it. If it is unpopular, I am sorry for it. But I shall cheerfully take my share of its unpopularity. For such, I am convinced, ought to be the conduct of one whose object it is, not to flatter the people, but to serve them.

A SPEECH

Delivered in a Committee of the House of Commons on the 28th of February, 1832.

On Tuesday, the twenty-eighth of February, 1832, in the Committee on the Bill to amend the representation of the people in England and Wales, the question was put, "That the Tower Hamlets, Middlesex, stand part of Schedule C." The opponents of the Bill mustered their whole strength on this occasion, and were joined by some members who had voted with the Government on the second reading. The question was carried, however, by 316 votes to 236. The following Speech was made in reply to the Marquess of Chandos and Sir Edward Sugden, who, on very different grounds, objected to any increase in the number of metropolitan members.

Mr Bernal,—I have spoken so often on the question of Parliamentary Reform, that I am very unwilling to occupy the time of the Committee. But the importance of the amendment proposed by the noble Marquess, and the peculiar circumstances in which we are placed to-night, make me so anxious that I cannot remain silent.

In this debate, as in every other debate, our first object should be to ascertain on which side the burden of the proof lies. Now, it seems to me quite clear that the burden of the proof lies on those who support the amendment. I am entitled to take it for granted that it is right and wise to give representatives to some wealthy and populous places which have hitherto been unrepresented. To this extent, at least, we all, with scarcely an exception, now profess ourselves Reformers. There is, indeed, a great party which still objects to the disfranchising even of the smallest boroughs. But all the most distinguished chiefs of that party have, here and elsewhere, admitted that the elective franchise ought to be given to some great towns which have risen into importance since our representative system took its present form. If this be so, on what ground can it be contended that these metropolitan districts ought not to be represented? Are they inferior in importance to the other places to which we are all prepared to give members? I use the word importance with perfect confidence: for, though in our recent debates there has been some dispute as to the standard by which the importance of towns is to be measured, there is no room for dispute here. Here, take what standard you will, the result will be the same. Take population: take the rental: take the number of ten pound houses: take the amount of the assessed taxes: take any test in short: take any number of tests, and combine those tests in any of the ingenious ways which men of science have suggested: multiply: divide: subtract: add: try squares or cubes: try square roots or cube roots: you will never be able to find a pretext for excluding these districts from Schedule C. If, then, it be acknowledged that the franchise ought to be given to important places which are at present unrepresented, and if it be acknowledged that these districts are in importance not inferior to any place which is at present unrepresented, you are bound to give us strong reasons for withholding the franchise from these districts.

The honourable and learned gentleman* has tried to give such reasons; and, in doing so, he has completely refuted the whole speech of the noble Marquess, with whom he means to divide.† The truth is that the noble Marquess and the honourable and learned gentleman, though they agree in their votes, do not at all agree in their forebodings or in their ulterior intentions. The honourable and learned gentleman thinks it dangerous to increase the number of metropolitan voters. The noble Lord is perfectly willing to increase the number of metropolitan voters, and objects only to any increase in the number of metropolitan members. "Will you," says the honourable and learned gentleman, "be so rash, so insane, as to create constituent bodies of twenty or thirty thousand electors?" "Yes," says the noble Marquess, "and much more than that. I will create constituent bodies of forty thousand, sixty thousand, a hundred thousand. I will add Marylebone to Westminster. I will add Lambeth to Southwark. I will add Finsbury and the Tower Hamlets to the City." The noble Marquess, it is clear, is not afraid of the excitement which may be produced by the polling of immense multitudes. Of what then is he afraid? Simply of eight members: nay, of six members: for he is willing, he tells us, to add two members to the two who already sit for Middlesex, and who may be considered as metropolitan members. Are six members, then, so formidable? I could mention a single peer who now sends more than six members to the House. But, says the noble Marquess, the members for the metropolitan districts will be called to a strict account by their constituents: they will be mere delegates: they will be forced to speak, not their own sense, but the sense of the capital. I will answer for it, Sir, that they will not be called to a stricter account than those gentlemen who are nominated by some great proprietors of boroughs. Is it not notorious that those who represent it as in the highest degree pernicious and degrading that a public man should be called to account by a great city which has intrusted its dearest interests to his care, do nevertheless think that he is bound by the most sacred ties of honour to vote according to the wishes of his patron or to apply for the Chiltern Hundreds? It is a bad thing, I fully admit, that a Member of Parliament should be a mere delegate. But it is not worse that he should be the delegate of a hundred thousand people than of one too powerful individual. What a perverse, what an inconsistent spirit is this; too proud to bend to the wishes of a nation, yet ready to lick the dust at the feet of a patron! And how is it proved that a member for Lambeth or Finsbury will be under a more servile awe of his constituents than a member for Leicester, or a member for Leicestershire, or a member for the University of Oxford? Is it not perfectly notorious that many members voted, year after year, against Catholic Emancipation, simply because they knew that, if they voted otherwise, they would lose their seats? No doubt this is an evil. But it is an evil which will exist in some form or other as long as human nature is the same, as long as there are men so low-minded as to prefer the gratification of a vulgar ambition to the approbation of their conscience and the welfare of their country. Construct your representative system as you will, these men will always be sycophants. If you give power to Marylebone, they will fawn on the householders of Marylebone. If you leave power to Gatton, they will fawn on the proprietor of Gatton. I can see no reason for believing that their baseness will be more mischievous in the former case than in the latter.

But, it is said, the power of this huge capital is even now dangerously great; and will you increase that power? Now, Sir, I am far from denying that the power of London is, in some sense, dangerously great; but I altogether deny that the danger will be increased by this bill. It has always been found that a hundred thousand people congregated close to the seat of government exercise a greater influence on public affairs than five hundred thousand dispersed over a remote province. But this influence is not proportioned to the number of representatives chosen by the capital. This influence is felt at present, though the greater part of the capital is unrepresented. This influence is felt in countries where there is no representative system at all. Indeed, this influence is nowhere so great as under despotic governments. I need not remind the Committee that the Cæsars, while ruling by the sword, while putting to death without a trial every senator, every magistrate, who incurred their displeasure, yet found it necessary to keep the populace of the imperial city in good humour by distributions of corn and shows of wild beasts. Every country, from Britain to Egypt, was squeezed for the means of filling the granaries and adorning the theatres of Rome. On more than one occasion, long after the Cortes of Castile had become a mere name, the rabble of Madrid assembled before the royal palace, forced their King, their absolute King, to appear in the balcony, and exacted from him a promise that he would dismiss an obnoxious minister. It was in this way that Charles the Second was forced to part with Oropesa, and that Charles the Third was forced to part with Squillaci. If there is any country in the world where pure despotism exists, that country is Turkey; and yet there is no country in the world where the inhabitants of the capital are so much dreaded by the government. The Sultan, who stands in awe of nothing else, stands in awe of the turbulent populace, which may, at any moment, besiege him in his Seraglio. As soon as Constantinople is up, everything is conceded. The unpopular edict is recalled. The unpopular vizier is beheaded. This sort of power has nothing to do with representation. It depends on physical force and on vicinity. You do not propose to take this sort of power away from London. Indeed, you cannot take it away. Nothing can take it away but an earthquake more terrible than that of Lisbon, or a fire more destructive than that of 1666. Law can do nothing against this description of power; for it is a power which is formidable only when law has ceased to exist. While the reign of law continues, eight votes in a House of six hundred and fifty-eight Members will hardly do much harm. When the reign of law is at an end, and the reign of violence commences, the importance of a million and a half of people, all collected within a walk of the Palace, of the Parliament House, of the Bank, of the Courts of Justice, will not be measured by eight or by eighty votes. See, then, what you are doing. That power which is not dangerous you refuse to London. That power which is dangerous you leave undiminished; nay, you make it more dangerous still. For by refusing to let eight or nine hundred thousand people express their opinions and wishes in a legal and constitutional way, you increase the risk of disaffection and of tumult. It is not necessary to have recourse to the speeches or writings of democrats to show that a represented district is far more likely to be turbulent than an unrepresented district. Mr Burke, surely not a rash innovator, not a flatterer of the multitude, described long ago in this place with admirable eloquence the effect produced by the law which gave representative institutions to the rebellious mountaineers of Wales. That law, he said, had been to an agitated nation what the twin stars celebrated by Horace were to a stormy sea; the wind had fallen; the clouds had dispersed; the threatening waves had sunk to rest. I have mentioned the commotions of Madrid and Constantinople. Why is it that the population of unrepresented London, though physically far more powerful than the population of Madrid or of Constantinople, has been far more peaceable? Why have we never seen the inhabitants of the metropolis besiege St James's, or force their way riotously into this House? Why, but because they have other means of giving vent to their feelings, because they enjoy the liberty of unlicensed printing, and the liberty of holding public meetings. Just as the people of unrepresented London are more orderly than the people of Constantinople and Madrid, so will the people of represented London be more orderly than the people of unrepresented London.

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* Sir E. Sugden.

† The Marquess of Chandos.

Surely, Sir, nothing can be more absurd than to withhold legal power from a portion of the community because that portion of the community possesses natural power. Yet that is precisely what the noble Marquess would have us do. In all ages a chief cause of the intestine disorders of states has been that the natural distribution of power and the legal distribution of power have not corresponded with each other. This is no newly discovered truth. It was well known to Aristotle more than two thousand years ago. It is illustrated by every part of ancient and of modern history, and eminently by the history of England during the last few months. Our country has been in serious danger; and why? Because a representative system, framed to suit the England of the thirteenth century, did not suit the England of the nineteenth century; because an old wall, the last relique of a departed city, retained the privileges of that city, while great towns, celebrated all over the world for wealth and intelligence, had no more share in the government than when they were still hamlets. The object of this bill is to correct those monstrous disproportions, and to bring the legal order of society into something like harmony with the natural order. What, then, can be more inconsistent with the fundamental principle of the bill than to exclude any district from a share in the representation, for no reason but because that district is, and must always be, one of great importance? This bill was meant to reconcile and unite. Will you frame it in such a manner that it must inevitably produce irritation and discord? This bill was meant to be final in the only rational sense of the word final. Will you frame it in such a way that it must inevitably be shortlived? Is it to be the first business of the first reformed House of Commons to pass a new Reform Bill? Gentlemen opposite have often predicted that the settlement which we are making will not be permanent; and they are now taking the surest way to accomplish their own prediction. I agree with them in disliking change merely as change. I would bear with many things which are indefensible in theory, nay, with some things which are grievous in practice, rather than venture on a change in the composition of Parliament. But when such a change is necessary,—and that such a change is now necessary is admitted by men of all parties,—then I hold that it ought to be full and effectual. A great crisis may be followed by the complete restoration of health. But no constitution will bear perpetual tampering. If the noble Marquess's amendment should unhappily be carried, it is morally certain that the immense population of Finsbury, of Marylebone, of Lambeth, of the Tower Hamlets, will, importunately and clamorously, demand redress from the reformed Parliament. That Parliament, you tell us, will be much more democratically inclined than the Parliaments of past times. If so, how can you expect that it will resist the urgent demands of a million of people close to its door? These eight seats will be given. More than eight seats will be given. The whole question of Reform will be opened again; and the blame will rest on those who will, by mutilating this great law in an essential part, cause hundreds of thousands who now regard it as a boon to regard it as an outrage.

Sir, our word is pledged. Let us remember the solemn promise which we gave to the nation last October at a perilous conjuncture. That promise was that we would stand firmly by the principles and leading provisions of the Reform Bill. Our sincerity is now brought to the test. One of the leading provisions of the bill is in danger. The question is, not merely whether these districts shall be represented, but whether we will keep the faith which we plighted to our countrymen. Let us be firm. Let us make no concession to those who, having in vain tried to throw the bill out, are now trying to fritter it away. An attempt has been made to induce the Irish members to vote against the government. It has been hinted that, perhaps, some of the seats taken from the metropolis may be given to Ireland. Our Irish friends will, I doubt not, remember that the very persons who offer this bribe exerted themselves not long ago to raise a cry against the proposition to give additional members to Belfast, Limerick, Waterford, and Galway. The truth is that our enemies wish only to divide us, and care not by what means. One day they try to excite jealousy among the English by asserting that the plan of the government is too favourable to Ireland. Next day they try to bribe the Irish to desert us, by promising to give something to Ireland at the expense of England. Let us disappoint these cunning men. Let us, from whatever part of the United Kingdom we come, be true to each other and to the good cause. We have the confidence of our country. We have justly earned it. For God's sake let us not throw it away. Other occasions may arise on which honest Reformers may fairly take different sides. But to-night he that is not with us is against us.

A SPEECH

DELIVERED IN THE HOUSE OF COMMONS ON THE 6TH OF FEBRUARY 1833.

On the twenty-ninth of January 1833, the first Parliament elected under the Reform Act of 1832 met at Westminster. On the fifth of February, King William the Fourth made a speech from the throne, in which he expressed his hope that the Houses would entrust him with such powers as might be necessary for maintaining order in Ireland and for preserving and strengthening the union between that country and Great Britain. An Address, assuring His Majesty of the concurrence and support of the Commons, was moved by Lord Ormelie and seconded by Mr John Marshall. Mr O'Connell opposed the Address, and moved, as an amendment, that the House should resolve itself into a Committee. After a discussion of four nights the amendment was rejected by 428 votes to 40. On the second night of the debate the following Speech was made.

LAST night, Sir, I thought that it would not be necessary for me to take any part in the present debate: but the appeal which has this evening been made to me by my honourable friend the Member for Lincoln* has forced me to rise. I will, however, postpone the few words which I have to say in defence of my own consistency, till I have expressed my opinion on the much more important subject which is before the House.

My honourable friend tells us that we are now called upon to make a choice between two modes of pacifying Ireland; that the government recommends coercion; that the honourable and learned Member for Dublin † recommends redress; and that it is our duty to try the effect of redress before we have recourse to coercion. The antithesis is framed with all the ingenuity which is characteristic of my honourable friend's style; but I cannot help thinking that, on this occasion, his ingenuity has imposed on himself, and that he has not sufficiently considered the meaning of the pointed phrase which he used with so much effect. Redress is no doubt a very well sounding word. What can be more reasonable than to ask for redress? What more unjust than to refuse redress? But my honourable friend will perceive, on reflection, that, though he and the honourable and learned Member for Dublin agree in pronouncing the word redress, they agree in nothing else. They utter the same sound; but they attach to it two diametrically opposite meanings. The honourable and learned Member for Dublin means by redress simply the Repeal of the Union. Now, to the Repeal of the Union my honourable friend the Member for Lincoln is decidedly adverse. When we get at his real meaning, we find that he is just as unwilling as we are to give the redress which the honourable and learned Member for Dublin demands. Only a small minority of the House will, I hope and believe, vote with that honourable and learned member; but the minority which thinks with him will be very much smaller.

We have, indeed, been told by some gentlemen, who are not themselves repealers, that the question of Repeal deserves a much more serious consideration than it has yet received. Repeal, they say, is an object on which millions have, however unwisely, set their hearts; and men who speak in the name of millions are not to be coughed down or sneered down. That which a suffering nation regards, rightly or wrongly, as the sole cure for all its distempers, ought not to be treated with levity, but to be the subject of full and solemn debate. All this, Sir, is most true: but I am surprised that this lecture should have been read to us who sit on your right. It would, I apprehend, have been with more propriety addressed to a different quarter. Whose fault is it that we have not yet had, and that there is no prospect of our having, this full and solemn debate? Is it the fault of His Majesty's Ministers? Have not they framed the Speech which their Royal Master delivered from the throne, in such a manner as to invite the grave and searching discussion of the question of Repeal? And has not the invitation been declined? Is it not fresh in our recollection that the honourable and learned Member for Dublin spoke two hours, perhaps three hours,—nobody keeps accurate account of time while he speaks,—but two or three hours without venturing to join issue with us on this subject? In truth, he suffered judgment to go against him by default. We, on this side of the House, did our best to provoke him to the conflict. We called on him to maintain here those doctrines which he had proclaimed elsewhere with so much vehemence, and, I am sorry to be forced to add, with a scurrility unworthy of his parts and eloquence. Never was a challenge more fairly given: but it was not accepted. The great champion of Repeal would not lift our glove. He shrank back; he skulked away; not, assuredly, from distrust of his powers, which have never been more vigorously exerted than in this debate, but evidently from distrust of his cause. I have seldom heard so able a speech as his: I certainly never heard a speech so evasive. From the beginning to the end he studiously avoided saying a single word tending to raise a discussion about that Repeal which, in other places, he constantly affirms to be the sole panacea for all the evils by which his country is afflicted. Nor is this all. Yesterday night he placed on our order-book not less than fourteen notices; and of those notices not a single one had any reference to the Union between Great Britain and Ireland. It is therefore evident to me, not only that the honourable and learned gentleman is not now prepared to debate the question in this House, but that he has no intention of debating it in this House at all. He keeps it, and prudently keeps it, for audiences of a very different kind. I am therefore, I repeat, surprised to hear the Government accused of avoiding the discussion of this subject. Why should we avoid a battle in which the bold and skilful captain of the enemy evidently knows that we must be victorious?

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* Mr Edward Lytton Bulwer.

† Mr O'Connell.

One gentleman, though not a repealer, has begged us not to declare ourselves decidedly adverse to repeal till we have studied the petitions which are coming in from Ireland. Really, Sir, this is not a subject on which any public man ought to be now making up his mind. My mind is made up. My reasons are such as, I am certain, no petition from Ireland will confute. Those reasons have long been ready to be produced; and, since we are accused of flinching, I will at once produce them. I am prepared to show that the Repeal of the Union would not remove the political and social evils which afflict Ireland, nay, that it would aggravate almost every one of those evils.

I understand, though I do not approve, the proceedings of poor Wolfe

Tone and his confederates. They wished to make a complete separation between Great Britain and Ireland. They wished to establish a Hibernian republic. Their plan was a very bad one ; but, to do them justice, it was perfectly consistent ; and an ingenious man might defend it by some plausible arguments. But that is not the plan of the honourable and learned Member for Dublin. He assures us that he wishes the connection between the islands to be perpetual. He is for a complete separation between the two Parliaments ; but he is for indissoluble union between the two Crowns. Nor does the honourable and learned gentleman mean, by an union between the Crowns, such an union as exists between the Crown of this kingdom and the Crown of Hanover. For I need not say that, though the same person is king of Great Britain and of Hanover, there is no more political connection between Great Britain and Hanover than between Great Britain and Hesse, or between Great Britain and Bavaria. Hanover may be at peace with a state with which Great Britain is at war. Nay, Hanover may, as a member of the Germanic body, send a contingent of troops to cross bayonets with the King's English footguards. This is not the relation in which the honourable and learned gentleman proposes that Great Britain and Ireland should stand to each other. His plan is, that each of the two countries shall have an independent legislature, but that both shall have the same executive government. Now, is it possible that a mind so acute and so well informed as his should not at once perceive that this plan involves an absurdity, a downright contradiction. Two independent legislatures ! One executive government ! How can the thing be ? No doubt, if the legislative power were quite distinct from the executive power, England and Ireland might as easily have two legislatures as two Chancellors and two Courts of King's Bench. But though, in books written by theorists, the executive power and the legislative power may be treated as things quite distinct, every man acquainted with the real working of our constitution knows that the two powers are most closely connected, nay, intermingled with each other. During several generations, the whole administration of affairs has been conducted in conformity with the sense of Parliament. About every exercise of the prerogative of the Crown it is the privilege of Parliament to offer advice ; and that advice no wise king will ever slight. It is the prerogative of the Sovereign to choose his own servants ; but it is impossible for him to maintain them in office unless Parliament will support them. It is the prerogative of the Sovereign to treat with other princes ; but it is impossible for him to persist in any scheme of foreign policy which is disagreeable to Parliament. It is the prerogative of the Sovereign to make war ; but he cannot raise a battalion or man a frigate without the help of Parliament. The repealers may therefore be refuted out of their own mouths. They say that Great Britain and Ireland ought to have one executive power. But the legislature has a most important share of the executive power. Therefore, by the confession of the repealers themselves, Great Britain and Ireland ought to have one legislature.

Consider for one moment in what a situation the executive government will be placed if you have two independent legislatures, and if those legislatures should differ, as all bodies which are independent of each other will sometimes differ. Suppose the case of a commercial treaty which is unpopular in England and popular in Ireland. The Irish Parliament expresses its approbation of the terms, and passes a vote of thanks to the negotiator. We at Westminster censure the terms and impeach the negotiator. Or are we to have two foreign offices, one in Downing Street and one in Dublin Castle? Is His Majesty to send to every court in Christendom two diplomatic agents, to thwart each other, and to be spies upon each other? It is inconceivable but that, in a very few years, disputes such as can be terminated only by arms must arise between communities so absurdly united and so absurdly disunited. All history confirms this reasoning. Superficial observers have fancied that they had found cases on the other side. But as soon as you examine those cases you will see either that they bear no analogy to the case with which we have to deal, or that they corroborate my argument. The case of Ireland herself has been cited. Ireland, it has been said, had an independent legislature from 1782 to 1800: during eighteen years there were two coequal parliaments under one Crown; and yet there was no collision. Sir, the reason that there was not perpetual collision was, as we all know, that the Irish parliament, though nominally independent, was generally kept in real dependence by means of the foulest corruption that ever existed in any assembly. But it is not true that there was no collision. Before the Irish legislature had been six years independent, a collision did take place, a collision such as might well have produced a civil war. In the year 1788, George the Third was incapacitated by illness from discharging his regal functions. According to the constitution, the duty of making provision for the discharge of those functions devolved on the parliaments of Great Britain and Ireland. Between the government of Great Britain and the government of Ireland there was, during the interregnum, no connection whatever. The sovereign who was the common head of both governments had virtually ceased to exist: and the two legislatures were no more to each other than this House and the Chamber of Deputies at Paris. What followed? The Parliament of Great Britain resolved to offer the Regency to the Prince of Wales under many important restrictions. The Parliament of Ireland made him an offer of the Regency without any restrictions whatever. By the same right by which the Irish Lords and Commons made that offer, they might, if Mr Pitt's doctrine be the constitutional doctrine, as I believe it to be, have made the Duke of York or the Duke of Leinster Regent. To this Regent they might have given all the prerogatives of the King. Suppose,—no extravagant supposition,—that George the Third had not recovered, that the rest of his long life had been passed in seclusion, Great Britain and Ireland would then have been, during thirty-two years, as completely separated as Great Britain and Spain. There would have been nothing in common between the governments, neither executive power nor legislative power. It is plain, therefore, that a total separation between the two islands might, in the natural course of things, and without the smallest violation of the constitution on either side, be the effect of the arrangement recommended by the honourable and learned gentleman, who solemnly declares that he should consider such a separation as the greatest of calamities.

No doubt, Sir, in several continental kingdoms there have been two legislatures, and indeed more than two legislatures, under the same Crown. But the explanation is simple. Those legislatures were of no real weight in the government. Under Louis the Fourteenth Brittany had its States; Burgundy had its States; and yet there was no collision between the States of Brittany and the States of Burgundy. But why? Because neither the States of Brittany nor the States of Burgundy imposed any real restraint on the arbitrary power of the monarch. So, in the dominions of the House of Hapsburg, there is the semblance of a legislature in Hungary and the semblance of a legislature in the Tyrol: but all the real power is with the Emperor. I do not say that you cannot have one executive power and two mock parliaments, two parliaments which merely transact parish business, two parliaments which exercise no more influence on great affairs of state than the vestry of St Pancras or the vestry of Marylebone. What I do say, and what common sense teaches, and what all history teaches, is this, that you cannot have one executive power and two real parliaments, two parliaments possessing such powers as the parliament of this country has possessed ever since the Revolution, two parliaments to the deliberate sense of which the Sovereign must conform. If they differ, how can he conform to the sense of both? The thing is as plain as a proposition in Euclid.

It is impossible for me to believe that considerations so obvious and so important should not have occurred to the honourable and learned Member for Dublin. Doubtless they have occurred to him; and therefore it is that he shrinks from arguing the question here. Nay, even when he harangues more credulous assemblies on the subject, he carefully avoids precise explanations; and the hints which sometimes escape him are not easily to be reconciled with each other. On one occasion, if the newspapers are to be trusted, he declared that his object was to establish a federal union between Great Britain and Ireland. A local parliament, it seems, is to sit at Dublin, and to send deputies to an imperial parliament which is to sit at Westminster. The honourable and learned gentleman thinks, I suppose, that in this way he evades the difficulties which I have pointed out. But he deceives himself. If, indeed, his local legislature is to be subject to his imperial legislature, if his local legislature is to be merely what the Assembly of Antigua or Barbadoes is, or what the Irish Parliament was before 1782, the danger of collision is no doubt removed: but what, on the honourable and learned gentleman's own principles, would Ireland gain by such an arrangement? If, on the other hand, his local legislature is to be for certain purposes independent, you have again the risk of collision. Suppose that a difference of opinion should arise between the Imperial Parliament and the Irish Parliament as to the limits of their powers, who is to decide between them? A dispute between the House of Commons and the House of Lords is bad enough. Yet in that case, the Sovereign can, by a high exercise of his prerogative, produce harmony. He can send us back to our constituents; and, if that expedient fails, he can create more lords. When, in 1705, the dispute between the Houses about the Aylesbury men ran high, Queen Anne restored concord by dismissing the Parliament. Seven years later she put an end to another conflict between the Houses by making twelve peers in one day. But who is to arbitrate between two representative bodies chosen by different constituent bodies? Look at what is now passing in America. Of all federal constitutions that of the United States is the best. It was framed by a convention which contained many wise and experienced men, and over which Washington presided. Yet there is a debateable ground on the frontier which separates the functions of Congress from those of the state legislatures. A dispute as to the exact boundary has lately arisen. Neither party seems disposed to yield: and, if both persist, there can be no umpire but the sword.

For my part, Sir, I have no hesitation in saying that I should very greatly prefer the total separation which the honourable and learned gentleman professes to consider as a calamity, to the partial separation which he has taught his countrymen to regard as a blessing. If, on a fair trial, it be found that Great Britain and Ireland cannot exist happily together as parts of one empire, in God's name let them separate. I wish to see them joined as the limbs of a well formed body are joined. In such a body the members assist each other : they are nourished by the same food : if one member suffer, all suffer with it : if one member rejoice, all rejoice with it. But I do not wish to see the countries united, like those wretched twins from Siam who were exhibited here a little while ago, by an unnatural ligament which made each the constant plague of the other, always in each other's way, more helpless than others because they had twice as many hands, slower than others because they had twice as many legs, sympathising with each other only in evil, not feeling each other's pleasures, not supported by each other's aliments, but tormented by each other's infirmities, and certain to perish miserably by each other's dissolution.

Ireland has undoubtedly just causes of complaint. We heard those causes recapitulated last night by the honourable and learned Member, who tells us that he represents not Dublin alone, but Ireland, and that he stands between his country and civil war. I do not deny that most of the grievances which he recounted exist, that they are serious, and that they ought to be remedied as far as it is in the power of legislation to remedy them. What I do deny is that they were caused by the Union, and that the Repeal of the Union would remove them. I listened attentively while the honourable and learned gentleman went through that long and melancholy list : and I am confident that he did not mention a single evil which was not a subject of bitter complaint while Ireland had a domestic parliament. Is it fair, is it reasonable in the honourable gentleman to impute to the Union evils which, as he knows better than any other man in this house, existed long before the Union? *Post hoc : ergo, propter hoc* is not always sound reasoning. But *ante hoc : ergo, non propter hoc* is unanswerable. The old rustic who told Sir Thomas More that Tenterden steeple was the cause of Godwin sands reasoned much better than the honourable and learned gentleman. For it was not till after Tenterden steeple was built that the frightful wrecks on the Godwin sands were heard of. But the honourable and learned gentleman would make Godwin sands the cause of Tenterden steeple. Some of the Irish grievances which he ascribes to the Union are not only older than the Union, but are not peculiarly Irish. They are common to England, Scotland, and Ireland ; and it was in order to get rid of them that we, for the common benefit of England, Scotland, and Ireland, passed the Reform Bill last year. Other grievances which the honourable and learned gentleman mentioned are doubtless local ; but is there to be a local legislature wherever there is a local grievance? Wales has had local grievances. We all remember the complaints which were made a few years ago about the Welsh judicial system ; but did anybody therefore propose that Wales should have a distinct parliament? Cornwall has some local grievances ; but does anybody propose that Cornwall shall have its own House of Lords and its own House of Commons? Leeds has local grievances. The majority of my constituents distrust and dislike the municipal government to which they are subject ; they therefore call loudly on us for corporation reform : but they do not ask us for a separate legislature. Of this I am quite sure, that every argument which has been urged for the purpose of showing that Great Britain and Ireland ought to have two distinct parliaments may be urged with far greater force for the purpose of showing that the north of Ireland and the south of Ireland ought to have two distinct parliaments. The House of Commons of the United Kingdom, it has been said, is chiefly elected by Protestants, and therefore cannot be trusted to legislate for Catholic Ireland. If this be so, how can an Irish House of Commons, chiefly elected by Catholics, be trusted to legislate for Protestant Ulster? It is perfectly notorious that theological antipathies are stronger in Ireland than here. I appeal to the honourable and learned gentleman himself. He has often declared that it is impossible for a Roman Catholic, whether prosecutor or culprit, to obtain justice from a jury of Orangemen. It is indeed certain that, in blood, religion, language, habits, character, the population of some of the northern counties of Ireland has much more in common with the population of England and Scotland than with the population of Munster and Connaught. I defy the honourable and learned Member, therefore, to find a reason for having a parliament at Dublin which will not be just as good a reason for having another parliament at Londonderry.

Sir, in showing, as I think I have shown, the absurdity of this cry for Repeal, I have in a great measure vindicated myself from the charge of inconsistency which has been brought against me by my honourable friend the Member for Lincoln. It is very easy to bring a volume of Hansard to the House, to read a few sentences of a speech made in very different circumstances, and to say, "Last year you were for pacifying England by concession: this year you are for pacifying Ireland by coercion. How can you vindicate your consistency?" Surely my honourable friend cannot but know that nothing is easier than to write a theme for severity, for clemency, for order, for liberty, for a contemplative life, for an active life, and so on. It was a common exercise in the ancient schools of rhetoric to take an abstract question, and to harangue first on one side and then on the other. The question, Ought popular discontents to be quieted by concession or coercion? would have been a very good subject for oratory of this kind. There is no lack of commonplaces on either side. But when we come to the real business of life, the value of these commonplaces depends entirely on the particular circumstances of the case which we are discussing. Nothing is easier than to write a treatise proving that it is lawful to resist extreme tyranny. Nothing is easier than to write a treatise setting forth the wickedness of wantonly bringing on a great society the miseries inseparable from revolution, the bloodshed, the spoliation, the anarchy. Both treatises may contain much that is true; but neither will enable us to decide whether a particular insurrection is or is not justifiable without a close examination of the facts. There is surely no inconsistency in speaking with respect of the memory of Lord Russell and with horror of the crime of Thistlewood; and, in my opinion, the conduct of Russell and the conduct of Thistlewood did not differ more widely than the cry for Parliamentary Reform and the cry for the Repeal of the Union. The Reform Bill I believe to be a blessing to the nation. Repeal I know to be a mere delusion. I know it to be impracticable: and I know that, if it were practicable, it would be pernicious to every part of the empire, and utterly ruinous to Ireland. Is it not then absurd to say that, because I wished last year to quiet the English people by giving them that which was beneficial to them, I am therefore bound in consistency to quiet the Irish people this year by giving them that which will be fatal to them? I utterly deny, too, that, in consenting to arm the government with extraordinary powers for the purpose of repressing disturbances in Ireland, I am guilty of the smallest inconsistency. On what occasion did I ever refuse to support any government in repressing disturbances? It is perfectly true that, in the debates on the Reform Bill, I imputed the tumults and outrages of 1830 to misrule. But did I ever say that those tumults and outrages ought to be tolerated? I did attribute the Kentish riots, the Hampshire riots, the burning of corn stacks, the destruction of threshing machines, to the obstinacy with which the Ministers of the Crown had refused to listen to the demands of the people. But did I ever say that the rioters ought not to be imprisoned, that the incendiaries ought not to be hanged? I did ascribe the disorders of Nottingham and the fearful sacking of Bristol to the unwise rejection of the Reform Bill by the Lords. But did I ever say that such excesses as were committed at Nottingham and Bristol ought not to be put down, if necessary, by the sword?

I would act towards Ireland on the same principles on which I acted towards England. In Ireland, as in England, I would remove every just cause of complaint; and in Ireland, as in England, I would support the Government in preserving the public peace. What is there inconsistent in this? My honourable friend seems to think that no person who believes that disturbances have been caused by maladministration can consistently lend his help to put down those disturbances. If that be so, the honourable and learned Member for Dublin is quite as inconsistent as I am; indeed, much more so; for he thinks very much worse of the Government than I do; and yet he declares himself willing to assist the Government in quelling the tumults which, as he assures us, its own misconduct is likely to produce. He told us yesterday that our harsh policy might perhaps goad the unthinking populace of Ireland into insurrection; and he added that, if there should be an insurrection, he should, while execrating us as the authors of all the mischief, be found in our ranks, and should be ready to support us in everything that might be necessary for the restoration of order. As to this part of the subject, there is no difference in principle between the honourable and learned gentleman and myself. In his opinion, it is probable that a time may soon come when vigorous coercion may be necessary, and when it may be the duty of every friend of Ireland to co-operate in the work of coercion. In my opinion, that time has already come. The grievances of Ireland are doubtless great, so great that I never would have connected myself with a Government which I did not believe to be intent on redressing those grievances. But am I, because the grievances of Ireland are great, and ought to be redressed, to abstain from redressing the worst grievance of all? Am I to look on quietly while the laws are insulted by a furious rabble, while houses are plundered and burned, while my peaceable fellow-subjects are butchered? The distribution of Church property, you tell us, is unjust. Perhaps I agree with you. But what then? To what purpose is it to talk about the distribution of Church property, while no property is secure? Then you try to deter us from putting down robbery, arson, and murder, by telling us that if we resort to coercion we shall raise a civil war. We are past that fear. Recollect that, in one county alone, there have been within a few weeks sixty murders or assaults with intent to murder and six hundred burglaries. Since we parted last summer the slaughter in Ireland has exceeded the slaughter of a pitched battle: the destruction of property has been as great as would have been caused by the storming of three or four towns. Civil war, indeed! I would rather live in the midst of any civil war that we have had in England during the last two hundred years than in some parts of Ireland at the present moment.

Rather, much rather, would I have lived on the line of march of the Pretender's army in 1745 than in Tipperary now. It is idle to threaten us with civil war; for we have it already; and it is because we are resolved to put an end to it that we are called base, and brutal, and bloody. Such are the epithets which the honourable and learned Member for Dublin thinks it becoming to pour forth against the party to which he owes every political privilege that he enjoys. He need not fear that any member of that party will be provoked into a conflict of scurrility. Use makes even sensitive minds callous to invective: and, copious as his vocabulary is, he will not easily find in it any foul name which has not been many times applied to those who sit around me, on account of the zeal and steadiness with which they supported the emancipation of the Roman Catholics. His reproaches are not more stinging than the reproaches which, in times not very remote, we endured unflinchingly in his cause. I can assure him that men who faced the cry of No Popery are not likely to be scared by the cry of Repeal. The time will come when history will do justice to the Whigs of England, and will faithfully relate how much they did and suffered for Ireland; how, for the sake of Ireland, they quitted office in 1807; how, for the sake of Ireland, they remained out of office more than twenty years, braving the frowns of the Court, braving the hisses of the multitude, renouncing power, and patronage, and salaries, and peerages, and garters, and yet not obtaining in return even a little fleeting popularity. I see on the benches near me men who might, by uttering one word against Catholic Emancipation, nay, by merely abstaining from uttering a word in favour of Catholic Emancipation, have been returned to this House without difficulty or expense, and who, rather than wrong their Irish fellow-subjects, were content to relinquish all the objects of their honourable ambition, and to retire into private life with conscience and fame untarnished. As to one eminent person, who seems to be regarded with especial malevolence by those who ought never to mention his name without reverence and gratitude, I will say only this: that the loudest clamour which the honourable and learned gentleman can excite against Lord Grey will be trifling when compared with the clamour which Lord Grey withstood in order to place the honourable and learned gentleman where he now sits. Though a young member of the Whig party, I will venture to speak in the name of the whole body. I tell the honourable and learned gentleman, that the same spirit which sustained us in a just contest for him will sustain us in an equally just contest against him. Calumny, abuse, royal displeasure, popular fury, exclusion from office, exclusion from Parliament, we were ready to endure them all, rather than that he should be less than a British subject. We never will suffer him to be more.

I stand here, Sir, for the first time as the representative of a new constituent body, one of the largest, most prosperous, and most enlightened towns in the kingdom. The electors of Leeds, believing that at this time the service of the people is not incompatible with the service of the Crown, have sent me to this House charged, in the language of His Majesty's writ, to do and consent, in their name and in their behalf, to such things as shall be proposed in the great Council of the nation. In the name, then, and on the behalf of my constituents, I give my full assent to that part of the Address wherein the House declares its resolution to maintain inviolate, by the help of God, the connection between Great Britain and Ireland, and to intrust to the Sovereign such powers as shall be necessary to secure property, to restore order, and to preserve the integrity of the empire.

A SPEECH

Delivered in a Committee of the whole House of Commons on the 17th of April, 1833.

On the seventeenth of April, 1833, the House of Commons resolved itself into a Committee to consider of the civil disabilities of the Jews. Mr Warburton took the chair. Mr Robert Grant moved the following resolution:—

"That it is the opinion of this Committee that it is expedient to remove all civil disabilities at present existing with respect to His Majesty's subjects professing the Jewish religion, with the like exceptions as are provided with respect to His Majesty's subjects professing the Roman Catholic religion."

The resolution passed without a division, after a warm debate, in the course of which the following Speech was made.

Mr Warburton,—I recollect, and my honourable friend the Member for the University of Oxford will recollect, that when this subject was discussed three years ago, it was remarked, by one whom we both loved and whom we both regret, that the strength of the case of the Jews was a serious inconvenience to their advocate, for that it was hardly possible to make a speech for them without wearying the audience by repeating truths which were universally admitted. If Sir James Mackintosh felt this difficulty when the question was first brought forward in this House, I may well despair of being able now to offer any arguments which have a pretence to novelty.

My honourable friend, the Member for the University of Oxford, began his speech by declaring that he had no intention of calling in question the principles of religious liberty. He utterly disclaims persecution, that is to say, persecution as defined by himself. It would, in his opinion, be persecution to hang a Jew, or to flay him, or to draw his teeth, or to imprison him, or to fine him; for every man who conducts himself peaceably has a right to his life and his limbs, to his personal liberty and his property. But it is not persecution, says my honourable friend, to exclude any individual or any class from office; for nobody has a right to office: in every country official appointments must be subject to such regulations as the supreme authority may choose to make; nor can any such regulations be reasonably complained of by any member of the society as unjust. He who obtains an office obtains it, not as matter of right, but as matter of favour. He who does not obtain an office is not wronged; he is only in that situation in which the vast majority of every community must necessarily be. There are in the United Kingdom five and twenty million Christians without places; and, if they do not complain, why should five and twenty thousand Jews complain of being in the same case? In this way my honourable friend has convinced himself that, as it would be most absurd in him and me to say that we are wronged because we are not Secretaries of State, so it is most absurd in the Jews to say that they are wronged, because they are, as a people, excluded from public employment.

Now, surely my honourable friend cannot have considered to what conclusions his reasoning leads. Those conclusions are so monstrous that he would, I am certain, shrink from them. Does he really mean that it would not be wrong in the legislature to enact that no man should be a judge unless he weighed twelve stone, or that no man should sit in parliament unless he were six feet high? We are about to bring in a bill for the government of India. Suppose that we were to insert in that bill a clause providing that no graduate of the University of Oxford should be Governor General or Governor of any Presidency, would not my honourable friend cry out against such a clause as most unjust to the learned body which he represents? And would he think himself sufficiently answered by being told, in his own words, that the appointment to office is a mere matter of favour, and that to exclude an individual or a class from office is no injury? Surely, on consideration, he must admit that official appointments ought not to be subject to regulations purely arbitrary, to regulations for which no reason can be given but mere caprice, and that those who would exclude any class from public employment are bound to show some special reason for the exclusion.

My honourable friend has appealed to us as Christians. Let me then ask him how he understands that great commandment which comprises the law and the prophets. Can we be said to do unto others as we would that they should do unto us if we wantonly inflict on them even the smallest pain? As Christians, surely we are bound to consider, first, whether, by excluding the Jews from all public trust, we give them pain; and, secondly, whether it be necessary to give them that pain in order to avert some greater evil. That by excluding them from public trust we inflict pain on them my honourable friend will not dispute. As a Christian, therefore, he is bound to relieve them from that pain, unless he can show, what I am sure he has not yet shown, that it is necessary to the general good that they should continue to suffer.

But where, he says, are you to stop, if once you admit into the House of Commons people who deny the authority of the Gospels? Will you let in a Mussulman? Will you let in a Parsee? Will you let in a Hindoo, who worships a lump of stone with seven heads? I will answer my honourable friend's question by another. Where does he mean to stop? Is he ready to roast unbelievers at slow fires? If not, let him tell us why: and I will engage to prove that his reason is just as decisive against the intolerance which he thinks a duty, as against the intolerance which he thinks a crime. Once admit that we are bound to inflict pain on a man because he is not of our religion; and where are you to stop? Why stop at the point fixed by my honourable friend rather than at the point fixed by the honourable Member for Oldham,* who would make the Jews incapable of holding land? And why stop at the point fixed by the honourable Member for Oldham rather than at the point which would have been fixed by a Spanish Inquisitor of the sixteenth century? When once you enter on a course of persecution, I defy you to find any reason for making a halt till you have reached the extreme point. When my honourable friend tells us that he will allow the Jews to possess property to any amount, but that he will not allow them to possess the smallest political power, he holds contradictory language. Property is power. The honourable Member for Oldham reasons better than my honourable friend. The honourable Member for Oldham sees very clearly that it is impossible to deprive a man of political power if you suffer him to be the proprietor of half a county, and therefore very consistently proposes to confiscate the landed estates of the Jews. But even the honourable Member for Oldham does not go far enough. He has not proposed to confiscate the personal property of the Jews. Yet it is perfectly certain that any Jew who has a million may easily make himself very important in the

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* Mr Cobbett.

State. By such steps we pass from official power to landed property, and from landed property to personal property, and from property to liberty, and from liberty to life. In truth, those persecutors who use the rack and the stake have much to say for themselves. They are convinced that their end is good; and it must be admitted that they employ means which are not unlikely to attain the end. Religious dissent has repeatedly been put down by sanguinary persecution. In that way the Albigenses were put down. In that way Protestantism was suppressed in Spain and Italy, so that it has never since reared its head. But I defy any body to produce an instance in which disabilities such as we are now considering have produced any other effect than that of making the sufferers angry and obstinate. My honourable friend should either persecute to some purpose, or not persecute at all. He dislikes the word persecution I know. He will not admit that the Jews are persecuted. And yet I am confident that he would rather be sent to the King's Bench Prison for three months, or be fined a hundred pounds, than be subject to the disabilities under which the Jews lie. How can he then say that to impose such disabilities is not persecution, and that to fine and imprison is persecution? All his reasoning consists in drawing arbitrary lines. What he does not wish to inflict he calls persecution. What he does wish to inflict he will not call persecution. What he takes from the Jews he calls political power. What he is too good-natured to take from the Jews he will not call political power. The Jew must not sit in Parliament: but he may be the proprietor of all the ten pound houses in a borough. He may have more fifty pound tenants than any peer in the kingdom. He may give the voters treats to please their palates, and hire bands of gipsies to break their heads, as if he were a Christian and a Marquess. All the rest of this system is of a piece. The Jew may be a juryman, but not a judge. He may decide issues of fact, but not issues of law. He may give a hundred thousand pounds damages; but he may not in the most trivial case grant a new trial. He may rule the money market: he may influence the exchanges: he may be summoned to congresses of Emperors and Kings. Great potentates, instead of negotiating a loan with him by tying him in a chair and pulling out his grinders, may treat with him as with a great potentate, and may postpone the declaring of war or the signing of a treaty till they have conferred with him. All this is as it should be: but he must not be a Privy Councillor. He must not be called Right Honourable, for that is political power. And who is it that we are trying to cheat in this way? Even Omniscience. Yes, Sir; we have been gravely told that the Jews are under the divine displeasure, and that if we give them political power God will visit us in judgment. Do we then think that God cannot distinguish between substance and form? Does not He know that, while we withhold from the Jews the semblance and name of political power, we suffer them to possess the substance? The plain truth is that my honourable friend is drawn in one direction by his opinions, and in a directly opposite direction by his excellent heart. He halts between two opinions. He tries to make a compromise between principles which admit of no compromise. He goes a certain way in intolerance. Then he stops, without being able to give a reason for stopping. But I know the reason. It is his humanity. Those who formerly dragged the Jew at a horse's tail, and singed his beard with blazing furzebushes, were much worse men than my honourable friend; but they were more consistent than he.

It has been said that it would be monstrous to see a Jew judge try a man for blasphemy. In my opinion it is monstrous to see any judge try a man for blasphemy under the present law. But, if the law on that subject were in a sound state, I do not see why a conscientious Jew might not try a blasphemer. Every man, I think, ought to be at liberty to discuss the evidences of religion; but no man ought to be at liberty to force on the unwilling ears and eyes of others sounds and sights which must cause annoyance and irritation. The distinction is clear. I think it wrong to punish a man for selling Paine's Age of Reason in a back-shop to those who choose to buy, or for delivering a Deistical lecture in a private room to those who choose to listen. But if a man exhibits at a window in the Strand a hideous caricature of that which is an object of awe and adoration to nine hundred and ninety-nine out of every thousand of the people who pass up and down that great thoroughfare; if a man in a place of public resort applies opprobrious epithets to names held in reverence by all Christians; such a man ought, in my opinion, to be severely punished, not for differing from us in opinion, but for committing a nuisance which gives us pain and disgust. He is no more entitled to outrage our feelings by obtruding his impiety on us, and to say that he is exercising his right of discussion, than to establish a yard for butchering horses close to our houses, and to say that he is exercising his right of property, or to run naked up and down the public streets, and to say that he is exercising his right of locomotion. He has a right of discussion, no doubt, as he has a right of property and a right of locomotion. But he must use all his rights so as not to infringe the rights of others.

These, Sir, are the principles on which I would frame the law of blasphemy; and if the law were so framed, I am at a loss to understand why a Jew might not enforce it as well as a Christian. I am not a Roman Catholic; but if I were a judge at Malta, I should have no scruple about punishing a bigoted Protestant who should burn the Pope in effigy before the eyes of thousands of Roman Catholics. I am not a Mussulman; but if I were a judge in India, I should have no scruple about punishing a Christian who should pollute a mosque. Why, then, should I doubt that a Jew, raised by his ability, learning, and integrity to the judicial bench, would deal properly with any person who, in a Christian country, should insult the Christian religion?

But, says my honourable friend, it has been prophesied that the Jews are to be wanderers on the face of the earth, and that they are not to mix on terms of equality with the people of the countries in which they sojourn. Now, Sir, I am confident that I can demonstrate that this is not the sense of any prophecy which is part of Holy Writ. For it is an undoubted fact that, in the United States of America, Jewish citizens do possess all the privileges possessed by Christian citizens. Therefore, if the prophecies mean that the Jews never shall, during their wanderings, be admitted by other nations to equal participation of political rights, the prophecies are false. But the prophecies are certainly not false. Therefore their meaning cannot be that which is attributed to them by my honourable friend.

Another objection which has been made to this motion is that the Jews look forward to the coming of a great deliverer, to their return to Palestine, to the rebuilding of their Temple, to the revival of their ancient worship, and that therefore they will always consider England, not their country, but merely as their place of exile. But, surely, Sir, it would be the grossest ignorance of human nature to imagine that the anticipation of an event which is to happen at some time altogether indefinite, of an event which has been vainly expected during many centuries, of an event which even those who confidently expect that it will happen do not confidently expect that they or their children or their grandchildren will see, can ever occupy the minds of men to such a degree as to make them regardless of what is near and present and certain. Indeed Christians, as well as Jews, believe that the existing order of things will come to an end. Many Christians believe that Jesus will visibly reign on earth during a thousand years. Expositors of prophecy have gone so far as to fix the year when the Millennial period is to commence. The prevailing opinion is, I think, in favour of the year 1866; but, according to some commentators, the time is close at hand. Are we to exclude all millennarians from Parliament and office, on the ground that they are impatiently looking forward to the miraculous monarchy which is to supersede the present dynasty and the present constitution of England, and that therefore they cannot be heartily loyal to King William?

In one important point, Sir, my honourable friend, the Member for the University of Oxford, must acknowledge that the Jewish religion is of all erroneous religions the least mischievous. There is not the slightest chance that the Jewish religion will spread. The Jew does not wish to make proselytes. He may be said to reject them. He thinks it almost culpable in one who does not belong to his race to presume to belong to his religion. It is therefore not strange that a conversion from Christianity to Judaism should be a rarer occurrence than a total eclipse of the sun. There was one distinguished convert in the last century, Lord George Gordon; and the history of his conversion deserves to be remembered. For if ever there was a proselyte of whom a proselytising sect would have been proud, it was Lord George; not only because he was a man of high birth and rank; not only because he had been a member of the legislature; but also because he had been distinguished by the intolerance, nay, the ferocity, of his zeal for his own form of Christianity. But was he allured into the Synagogue? Was he even welcomed to it? No, sir; he was coldly and reluctantly permitted to share the reproach and suffering of the chosen people; but he was sternly shut out from their privileges. He underwent the painful rite which their law enjoins. But when, on his deathbed, he begged hard to be buried among them according to their ceremonial, he was told that his request could not be granted. I understand that cry of "Hear." It reminds me that one of the arguments against this motion is that the Jews are an unsocial people, that they draw close to each other, and stand aloof from strangers. Really, Sir, it is amusing to compare the manner in which the question of Catholic emancipation was argued formerly by some gentlemen with the manner in which the question of Jew emancipation is argued by the same gentlemen now. When the question was about Catholic emancipation, the cry was, "See how restless, how versatile, how encroaching, how insinuating, is the spirit of the Church of Rome. See how her priests compass earth and sea to make one proselyte, how indefatigably they toil, how attentively they study the weak and strong parts of every character, how skilfully they employ literature, arts, sciences, as engines for the propagation of their faith. You find them in every region and under every disguise, collating manuscripts in the Bodleian, fixing telescopes in the observatory of Pekin, teaching the use of the plough and the spinning-wheel to the savages of Paraguay. Will you give power to the members of a Church so busy, so aggressive, so insatiable?" Well, now the question is about people who never try to seduce any stranger to join them, and who do not wish anybody to be of their faith who is not also of their blood. And now you exclaim, "Will you give power to the members of a sect which remains sullenly apart from other sects, which does not invite, nay, which hardly even admits neophytes?" The truth is, that bigotry will never want a pretence. Whatever the sect be which it is proposed to tolerate, the peculiarities of that sect will, for the time, be pronounced by intolerant men to be the most odious and dangerous that can be conceived. As to the Jews, that they are unsocial as respects religion is true; and so much the better: for, surely, as Christians, we cannot wish that they should bestir themselves to pervert us from our own faith. But that the Jews would be unsocial members of the civil community, if the civil community did its duty by them, has never been proved. My right honourable friend who made the motion which we are discussing has produced a great body of evidence to show that they have been grossly misrepresented; and that evidence has not been refuted by my honourable friend the Member for the University of Oxford. But what if it were true that the Jews are unsocial? What if it were true that they do not regard England as their country? Would not the treatment which they have undergone explain and excuse their antipathy to the society in which they live? Has not similar antipathy often been felt by persecuted Christians to the society which persecuted them? While the bloody code of Elizabeth was enforced against the English Roman Catholics, what was the patriotism of Roman Catholics? Oliver Cromwell said that in his time they were Espaniolised. At a later period it might have been said that they were Gallicised. It was the same with the Calvinists. What more deadly enemies had France in the days of Louis the Fourteenth than the persecuted Huguenots? But would any rational man infer from these facts that either the Roman Catholic as such, or the Calvinist as such, is incapable of loving the land of his birth? If England were now invaded by Roman Catholics, how many English Roman Catholics would go over to the invader? If France were now attacked by a Protestant enemy, how many French Protestants would lend him help? Why not try what effect would be produced on the Jews by that tolerant policy which has made the English Roman Catholic a good Englishman, and the French Calvinist a good Frenchman?

Another charge has been brought against the Jews, not by my honourable friend the Member for the University of Oxford—he has too much learning and too much good feeling to make such a charge—but by the honourable Member for Oldham, who has, I am sorry to see, quitted his place. The honourable Member for Oldham tells us that the Jews are naturally a mean race, a sordid race, a money-getting race; that they are averse to all honourable callings; that they neither sow nor reap; that they have neither flocks nor herds; that usury is the only pursuit for which they are fit; that they are destitute of all elevated and amiable sentiments. Such, Sir, has in every age been the reasoning of bigots. They never fail to plead in justification of persecution the vices which persecution has engendered. England has been to the Jews less than half a country; and we revile them because they do not feel for England more than a half patriotism. We treat them as slaves, and wonder that they do not regard us as brethren. We drive them to mean occupations, and then reproach them for not embracing honourable professions. We long forbade them to possess land; and we complain that they chiefly occupy themselves in trade. We shut them out from all the paths of ambition;

and then we despise them for taking refuge in avarice. During many ages we have, in all our dealings with them, abused our immense superiority of force; and then we are disgusted because they have recourse to that cunning which is the natural and universal defence of the weak against the violence of the strong. But were they always a mere money-changing, money-getting, money-hoarding race? Nobody knows better than my honourable friend the Member for the University of Oxford that there is nothing in their national character which unfits them for the highest duties of citizens. He knows that, in the infancy of civilisation, when our island was as savage as New Guinea, when letters and arts were still unknown to Athens, when scarcely a thatched hut stood on what was afterwards the site of Rome, this contemned people had their fenced cities and cedar palaces, their splendid Temple, their fleets of merchant ships, their schools of sacred learning, their great statesmen and soldiers, their natural philosophers, their historians and their poets. What nation ever contended more manfully against overwhelming odds for its independence and religion? What nation ever, in its last agonies, gave such signal proofs of what may be accomplished by a brave despair? And if, in the course of many centuries, the oppressed descendants of warriors and sages have degenerated from the qualities of their fathers, if, while excluded from the blessings of law, and bowed down under the yoke of slavery, they have contracted some of the vices of outlaws and of slaves, shall we consider this as matter of reproach to them? Shall we not rather consider it as matter of shame and remorse to ourselves? Let us do justice to them. Let us open to them the door of the House of Commons. Let us open to them every career in which ability and energy can be displayed. Till we have done this, let us not presume to say that there is no genius among the countrymen of Isaiah, no heroism among the descendants of the Maccabees.

Sir, in supporting the motion of my honourable friend, I am, I firmly believe, supporting the honour and the interests of the Christian religion. I should think that I insulted that religion if I said that it cannot stand unaided by intolerant laws. Without such laws it was established, and without such laws it may be maintained. It triumphed over the superstitions of the most refined and of the most savage nations, over the graceful mythology of Greece and the bloody idolatry of the Northern forests. It prevailed over the power and policy of the Roman empire. It tamed the barbarians by whom that empire was overthrown. But all these victories were gained not by the help of intolerance, but in spite of the opposition of intolerance. The whole history of Christianity proves that she has little indeed to fear from persecution as a foe, but much to fear from persecution as an ally. May she long continue to bless our country with her benignant influence, strong in her sublime philosophy, strong in her spotless morality, strong in those internal and external evidences to which the most powerful and comprehensive of human intellects have yielded assent, the last solace of those who have outlived every earthly hope, the last restraint of those who are raised above every earthly fear! But let not us, mistaking her character and her interests, fight the battle of truth with the weapons of error, and endeavour to support by oppression that religion which first taught the human race the great lesson of universal charity.

A SPEECH

DELIVERED IN THE HOUSE OF COMMONS ON THE 10TH OF JULY 1833.

On Wednesday, the tenth of July 1833, Mr Charles Grant, President of the Board of Control, moved that the Bill for effecting an arrangement with the India Company, and for the better government of His Majesty's Indian territories, should be read a second time. The motion was carried without a division, but not without a long debate, in the course of which the following Speech was made.

HAVING, while this bill was in preparation, enjoyed the fullest and kindest confidence of my right honourable friend, the President of the Board of Control, agreeing with him completely in all those views which on a former occasion he so luminously and eloquently developed, having shared his anxieties, and feeling that in some degree I share his responsibility, I am naturally desirous to obtain the attention of the House while I attempt to defend the principles of the proposed arrangement. I wish that I could promise to be very brief; but the subject is so extensive that I will only promise to condense what I have to say as much as I can.

I rejoice, Sir, that I am completely dispensed, by the turn which our debates have taken, from the necessity of saying anything in favour of one part of our plan, the opening of the China trade. No voice, I believe, has yet been raised here in support of the monopoly. On that subject all public men of all parties seem to be agreed. The resolution proposed by the Ministers has received the unanimous assent of both Houses, and the approbation of the whole kingdom. I will not, therefore, Sir, detain you by vindicating what no gentleman has yet ventured to attack, but will proceed to call your attention to those effects which this great commercial revolution necessarily produced on the system of Indian government and finance.

The China trade is to be opened. Reason requires this. Public opinion requires it. The Government of the Duke of Wellington felt the necessity as strongly as the Government of Lord Grey. No Minister, Whig or Tory, could have been found to propose a renewal of the monopoly. No parliament, reformed or unreformed, would have listened to such a proposition. But though the opening of the trade was a matter concerning which the public had long made up its mind, the political consequences which must necessarily follow from the opening of the trade seem to me to be even now little understood. The language which I have heard in almost every circle where the subject was discussed was this: "Take away the monopoly, and leave the government of India to the Company:" a very short and convenient way of settling one of the most complicated questions that ever a legislature had to consider. The honourable Member for Sheffield,* though not disposed to retain the Company as an organ of government, has repeatedly used language which proves that he shares in the general misconception. The fact is that the abolition of the monopoly rendered it absolutely necessary to make a fundamental change in the constitution of that great Corporation.

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* Mr Buckingham.

The Company had united in itself two characters, the character of trader and the character of sovereign. Between the trader and the sovereign there was a long and complicated account, almost every item of which furnished matter for litigation. While the monopoly continued, indeed, litigation was averted. The effect of the monopoly was, to satisfy the claims both of commerce and of territory, at the expense of a third party, the English people : to secure at once funds for the dividend of the stockholder and funds for the government of the Indian Empire, by means of a heavy tax on the tea consumed in this country. But, when the third party would no longer bear this charge, all the great financial questions which had, at the cost of that third party, been kept in abeyance, were opened in an instant. The connection between the Company in its mercantile capacity, and the same Company in its political capacity, was dissolved. Even if the Company were permitted, as has been suggested, to govern India, and at the same time to trade with China, no advances would be made from the profits of its Chinese trade for the support of its Indian government. It was in consideration of the exclusive privilege that the Company had hitherto been required to make those advances ; it was by the exclusive privilege that the Company had been enabled to make them. When that privilege was taken away, it would be unreasonable in the legislature to impose such an obligation, and impossible for the Company to fulfil it. The whole system of loans from commerce to territory, and repayments from territory to commerce, must cease. Each party must rest altogether on its own resources. It was therefore absolutely necessary to ascertain what resources each party possessed, to bring the long and intricate account between them to a close, and to assign to each a fair portion of assets and liabilities. There was vast property. How much of that property was applicable to purposes of state? How much was applicable to a dividend? There were debts to the amount of many millions. Which of these were the debts of the government that ruled at Calcutta? Which of the great mercantile house that bought tea at Canton? Were the creditors to look to the land revenues of India for their money? Or, were they entitled to put executions into the warehouses behind Bishopsgate Street?

There were two ways of settling these questions—adjudication and compromise. The difficulties of adjudication were great ; I think insuperable. Whatever acuteness and diligence could do has been done. One person in particular, whose talents and industry peculiarly fitted him for such investigations, and of whom I can never think without regret, Mr Hyde Villiers, devoted himself to the examination with an ardour and a perseverance, which, I believe, shortened a life most valuable to his country and to his friends. The assistance of the most skilful accountants has been called in. But the difficulties are such as no accountant, however skilful, could possibly remove. The difficulties are not arithmetical, but political. They arise from the constitution of the Company, from the long and intimate union of the commercial and imperial characters in one body. Suppose that the treasurer of a charity were to mix up the money which he receives on account of the charity with his own private rents and dividends, to pay the whole into his bank to his own private account, to draw it out again by cheques in exactly the same form when he wanted it for his private expenses, and when he wanted it for the purposes of his public trust. Suppose that he were to continue to act thus till he was himself ignorant whether he were in advance or in arrear ; and suppose that many years after his death a question were to arise whether his estate were in debt to the charity or the charity in debt to his estate. Such is the question which is now before us, with this important difference; that the accounts of an individual could not be in such a state unless he had been guilty of fraud, or of that gross negligence which is scarcely less culpable than fraud, and that the accounts of the Company were brought into this state by circumstances of a very peculiar kind, by circumstances unparalleled in the history of the world.

It is a mistake to suppose that the Company was a merely commercial body till the middle of the last century. Commerce was its chief object; but in order to enable it to pursue that object, it had been, like the other Companies which were its rivals, like the Dutch India Company, like the French India Company, invested from a very early period with political functions. More than a hundred and twenty years ago, the Company was in miniature precisely what it now is. It was intrusted with the very highest prerogatives of sovereignty. It had its forts, and its white captains, and its black sepoys; it had its civil and criminal tribunals; it was authorised to proclaim martial law; it sent ambassadors to the native governments, and concluded treaties with them; it was Zemindar of several districts, and within those districts, like other Zemindars of the first class, it exercised the powers of a sovereign, even to the infliction of capital punishment on the Hindoos within its jurisdiction. It is incorrect, therefore, to say, that the Company was at first a mere trader, and has since become a sovereign. It was at first a great trader and a petty prince. The political functions at first attracted little notice, because they were merely auxiliary to the commercial functions. By degrees, however, the political functions became more and more important. The Zemindar became a great nabob, became sovereign of all India; the two hundred sepoys became two hundred thousand. This change was gradually wrought, and was not immediately comprehended. It was natural that, while the political functions of the Company were merely auxiliary to its commerce, the political accounts should have been mixed up with the commercial accounts. It was equally natural that this mode of keeping accounts, having once been established, should have remained unaltered; and the more so, as the change in the situation of the Company, though rapid, was not sudden. It is impossible to name any one day, or any one year, as the day or the year when the Company became a great potentate. It has been the fashion indeed to fix on the year 1765, the year in which the Mogul issued a commission authorising the Company to administer the revenues of Bengal, Bahar, and Orissa, as the precise date of the accession of this singular body to sovereignty. I am utterly at a loss to understand why this epoch should be selected. Long before 1765 the Company had the reality of political power. Long before that year, they made a Nabob of Arcot; they made and unmade Nabobs of Bengal; they humbled the Vizier of Oude; they braved the Emperor of Hindostan himself; more than half the revenues of Bengal were, under one pretence or another, administered by them. And after the grant, the Company was not, in form and name, an independent power. It was merely a minister of the Court of Delhi. Its coinage bore the name of Shah Alam. The inscription which, down to the time of the Marquess of Hastings, appeared on the seal of the Governor-General, declared that great functionary to be the slave of the Mogul. Even to this day we have never formally deposed the King of Delhi. The Company contents itself with being Mayor of the Palace, while the *Roi Fainéant* is suffered to play at being a sovereign. In fact, it was considered, both by Lord Clive and by Warren Hastings, as a point of policy to leave the character of the Company thus undefined, in order that the English might treat the princes in whose names they governed as realities or nonentities, just as might be most convenient.

Thus the transformation of the Company from a trading body, which possessed some sovereign prerogatives for the purposes of trade, into a sovereign body, the trade of which was auxiliary to its sovereignty, was effected by degrees and under disguise. It is not strange, therefore, that the mercantile and political transactions of this great corporation should be entangled together in inextricable complication. The commercial investments have been purchased out of the revenues of the empire. The expenses of war and government have been defrayed out of the profits of the trade. Commerce and territory have contributed to the improvement of the same spot of land, to the repairs of the same building. Securities have been given in precisely the same form for money which has been borrowed for purposes of State, and for money which has been borrowed for purposes of traffic. It is easy, indeed,—and this is a circumstance which has, I think, misled some gentlemen,—it is easy to see what part of the assets of the Company appears in a commercial form, and what part appears in a political or territorial form. But this is not the question. Assets which are commercial in form may be territorial as respects the right of property; assets which are territorial in form may be commercial as respects the right of property. A chest of tea is not necessarily commercial property; it may have been bought out of the territorial revenue. A fort is not necessarily territorial property; it may stand on ground which the Company bought a hundred years ago out of their commercial profits. Adjudication, if by adjudication be meant decision according to some known rule of law, was out of the question. To leave matters like these to be determined by the ordinary maxims of our civil jurisprudence would have been the height of absurdity and injustice. For example, the home bond debt of the Company, it is believed, was incurred partly for political and partly for commercial purposes. But there is no evidence which would enable us to assign to each branch its proper share. The bonds all run in the same form; and a court of justice would, therefore, of course, either lay the whole burthen on the proprietors, or lay the whole on the territory. We have legal opinions, very respectable legal opinions, to the effect, that in strictness of law the territory is not responsible, and that the commercial assets are responsible for every farthing of the debts which were incurred for the government and defence of India. But though this may be, and I believe is, law, it is, I am sure, neither reason nor justice. On the other hand, it is urged by the advocates of the Company, that some valuable portions of the territory are the property of that body in its commercial capacity; that Calcutta, for example, is the private estate of the Company; that the Company holds the island of Bombay, in free and common socage, as of the Manor of East Greenwich. I will not pronounce any opinion on these points. I have considered them enough to see that there is quite difficulty enough in them to exercise all the ingenuity of all the lawyers in the kingdom for twenty years. But the fact is, Sir, that the municipal law was not made for controversies of this description. The existence of such a body as this gigantic corporation, this political monster of two natures, subject in one hemisphere, sovereign in another, had never been contemplated by the legislators or judges of former ages. Nothing but grotesque absurdity and atrocious injustice could have been the effect, if the claims and liabilities of such a body had been settled according to the rules of Westminster Hall, if the maxims of conveyancers had been applied to the titles by which flourishing cities and provinces are held, or the maxims of the law merchant to those promissory notes which are the securities for a great National Debt, raised for the purpose of exterminating the Pindarrees and humbling the Burmese.

It was, as I have said, absolutely impossible to bring the question between commerce and territory to a satisfactory adjudication; and I must add that, even if the difficulties which I have mentioned could have been surmounted, even if there had been reason to hope that a satisfactory adjudication could have been obtained, I should still have wished to avoid that course. I think it desirable that the Company should continue to have a share in the government of India; and it would evidently have been impossible, pending a litigation between commerce and territory, to leave any political power to the Company. It would clearly have been the duty of those who were charged with the superintendence of India, to be the patrons of India throughout that momentous litigation, to scrutinise with the utmost severity every claim which might be made on the Indian revenues, and to oppose, with energy and perseverance, every such claim, unless its justice were manifest. If the Company was to be engaged in a suit for many millions, in a suit which might last for many years, against the Indian territory, could we entrust the Company with the government of that territory? Could we put the plaintiff in the situation of *prochain ami* of the defendant? Could we appoint governors who would have an interest opposed in the most direct manner to the interest of the governed, whose stock would have been raised in value by every decision which added to the burthens of their subjects, and depressed by every decision which diminished those burthens? It would be absurd to suppose that they would efficiently defend our Indian Empire against the claims which they were themselves bringing against it; and it would be equally absurd to give the government of the Indian Empire to those who could not be trusted to defend its interests.

Seeing, then, that it was most difficult, if not wholly impossible, to resort to adjudication between commerce and territory, seeing that, if recourse were had to adjudication, it would be necessary to make a complete revolution in the whole constitution of India, the Government has proposed a compromise. That compromise, with some modifications which did not in the slightest degree affect its principle, and which, while they gave satisfaction to the Company, will eventually lay no additional burthen on the territory, has been accepted. It has, like all other compromises, been loudly censured by violent partisans on both sides. It has been represented by some as far too favourable to the Company, and by others as most unjust to the Company. Sir, I own that we cannot prove that either of these accusations is unfounded. It is of the very essence of our case that we should not be able to show that we have assigned, either to commerce or to territory, its precise due. For our principal reason for recommending a compromise was our full conviction that it was absolutely impossible to ascertain with precision what was due to commerce and what was due to territory. It is not strange that some people should accuse us of robbing the Company, and others of conferring a vast boon on the Company, at the expense of India: for we have proposed a middle course, on the very ground that there was a chance of a result much more favourable to the Company than our arrangement, and a chance also of a result much less favourable. If the questions pending between the

Company and India had been decided as the ardent supporters of the Company predicted, India would, if I calculate rightly, have paid eleven millions more than she will now have to pay. If those questions had been decided as some violent enemies of the Company predicted, that great body would have been utterly ruined. The very meaning of compromise is that each party gives up his chance of complete success, in order to be secured against the chance of utter failure. And, as men of sanguine minds always overrate the chances in their own favour, every fair compromise is sure to be severely censured on both sides. I conceive that, in a case so dark and complicated as this, the compromise which we recommend is sufficiently vindicated, if it cannot be proved to be unfair. We are not bound to prove it to be fair. For it would have been unnecessary for us to resort to compromise at all if we had been in possession of evidence which would have enabled us to pronounce, with certainty, what claims were fair and what were unfair. It seems to me that we have acted with due consideration for every party. The dividend which we give to the proprietors is precisely the same dividend which they have been receiving during forty years, and which they have expected to receive permanently. The price of their stock bears at present the same proportion to the price of other stock which it bore four or five years ago, before the anxiety and excitement which the late negotiations naturally produced had begun to operate. As to the territory, on the other hand, it is true that, if the assets which are now in a commercial form should not produce a fund sufficient to pay the debts and dividend of the Company, the territory must stand to the loss and pay the difference. But in return for taking this risk, the territory obtains an immediate release from claims to the amount of many millions. I certainly do not believe that all those claims could have been substantiated; but I know that very able men think differently. And, if only one-fourth of the sum demanded had been awarded to the Company, India would have lost more than the largest sum which, as it seems to me, she can possibly lose under the proposed arrangement.

In a pecuniary point of view, therefore, I conceive that we can defend the measure as it affects the territory. But to the territory the pecuniary question is of secondary importance. If we have made a good pecuniary bargain for India, but a bad political bargain, if we have saved three or four millions to the finances of that country, and given to it, at the same time, pernicious institutions, we shall indeed have been practising a most ruinous parsimony. If, on the other hand, it shall be found that we have added fifty or a hundred thousand pounds a-year to the expenditure of an empire which yields a revenue of twenty millions, but that we have at the same time secured to that empire, as far as in us lies, the blessings of good government, we shall have no reason to be ashamed of our profusion. I hope and believe that India will have to pay nothing. But on the most unfavourable supposition that can be made, she will not have to pay so much to the Company as she now pays annually to a single state pageant, to the titular Nabob of Bengal, for example, or the titular King of Delhi. What she pays to these nominal princes, who, while they did anything, did mischief, and who now do nothing, she may well consent to pay to her real rulers, if she receives from them, in return, efficient protection and good legislation.

We come then to the great question. Is it desirable to retain the Company as an organ of government for India? I think that it is desirable. The question is, I acknowledge, beset with difficulties. We have to solve one of the hardest problems in politics. We are trying to make brick without straw, to bring a clean thing out of an unclean, to give a good government to a people to whom we cannot give a free government. In this country, in any neighbouring country, it is easy to frame securities against oppression. In Europe, you have the materials of good government everywhere ready to your hands. The people are everywhere perfectly competent to hold some share, not in every country an equal share, but some share of political power. If the question were, What is the best mode of securing good government in Europe? the merest smatterer in politics would answer, representative institutions. In India you cannot have representative institutions. Of all the innumerable speculators who have offered their suggestions on Indian politics, not a single one, as far as I know, however democratical his opinions may be, has ever maintained the possibility of giving, at the present time, such institutions to India. One gentleman, extremely well acquainted with the affairs of our Eastern Empire, a most valuable servant of the Company, and the author of a History of India, which, though certainly not free from faults, is, I think, on the whole, the greatest historical work which has appeared in our language since that of Gibbon, I mean Mr Mill, was examined on this point. That gentleman is well known to be a very bold and uncompromising politician. He has written strongly, far too strongly I think, in favour of pure democracy. He has gone so far as to maintain that no nation which has not a representative legislature, chosen by universal suffrage, enjoys security against oppression. But when he was asked before the Committee of last year, whether he thought representative government practicable in India, his answer was, "utterly out of the question." This, then, is the state in which we are. We have to frame a good government for a country into which, by universal acknowledgment, we cannot introduce those institutions which all our habits, which all the reasonings of European philosophers, which all the history of our own part of the world would lead us to consider as the one great security for good government. We have to engraft on despotism those blessings which are the natural fruits of liberty. In these circumstances, Sir, it behoves us to be cautious, even to the verge of timidity. The light of political science and of history are withdrawn: we are walking in darkness: we do not distinctly see whither we are going. It is the wisdom of a man, so situated, to feel his way, and not to plant his foot till he is well assured that the ground before him is firm.

Some things, however, in the midst of this obscurity, I can see with clearness. I can see, for example, that it is desirable that the authority exercised in this country over the Indian government should be divided between two bodies, between a minister or a board appointed by the Crown, and some other body independent of the Crown. If India is to be a dependency of England, to be at war with our enemies, to be at peace with our allies, to be protected by the English navy from maritime aggression, to have a portion of the English army mixed with its sepoys, it plainly follows that the King, to whom the Constitution gives the direction of foreign affairs, and the command of the military and naval forces, ought to have a share in the direction of the Indian government. Yet, on the other hand, that a revenue of twenty millions a year, an army of two hundred thousand men, a civil service abounding with lucrative situations, should be left to the disposal of the Crown without any check whatever, is what no minister, I conceive, would venture to propose. This House is indeed the check provided by the Constitution on the abuse of the royal prerogative. But that this House is, or is likely ever to be, an efficient check on abuses practised in India, I altogether deny. We have, as I believe we all feel, quite business enough. If we were to undertake the task of looking into Indian affairs as we look into British affairs, if we were to have Indian budgets and Indian estimates, if we were to go into the Indian currency question and the Indian Bank Charter, if to our disputes about Belgium and Holland, Don Pedro and Don Miguel, were to be added disputes about the debts of the Guicowar and the disorders of Mysore, the ex-king of the Afghans and the Maharajah Runjeet Sing; if we were to have one night occupied by the embezzlements of the Benares mint, and another by the panic in the Calcutta money market; if the questions of Suttee or no Suttee, Pilgrim tax or no Pilgrim tax, Ryotwary or Zemindary, half Batta or whole Batta, were to be debated at the same length at which we have debated Church reform and the assessed taxes, twenty-four hours a day and three hundred and sixty-five days a year would be too short a time for the discharge of our duties. The House, it is plain, has not the necessary time to settle these matters; nor has it the necessary knowledge; nor has it the motives to acquire that knowledge. The late change in its constitution has made it, I believe, a much more faithful representative of the English people. But it is as far as ever from being a representative of the Indian people. A broken head in Cold Bath Fields produces a greater sensation among us than three pitched battles in India. A few weeks ago we had to decide on a claim brought by an individual against the revenues of India. If it had been an English question the walls would scarcely have held the Members who would have flocked to the division. It was an Indian question; and we could scarcely, by dint of supplication, make a House. Even when my right honourable friend, the President of the Board of Control, gave his able and interesting explanation of the plan which he intended to propose for the government of a hundred millions of human beings, the attendance was not so large as I have often seen it on a turnpike bill or a railroad bill.

I then take these things as proved, that the Crown must have a certain authority over India, that there must be an efficient check on the authority of the Crown, and that the House of Commons cannot be that efficient check. We must then find some other body to perform that important office. We have such a body, the Company. Shall we discard it?

It is true that the power of the Company is an anomaly in politics. It is strange, very strange, that a joint-stock society of traders, a society, the shares of which are daily passed from hand to hand, a society, the component parts of which are perpetually changing, a society, which, judging *a priori* from its constitution, we should have said was as little fitted for imperial functions as the Merchant Tailors' Company or the New River Company, should be intrusted with the sovereignty of a larger population, the disposal of a larger clear revenue, the command of a larger army, than are under the direct management of the Executive Government of the United Kingdom. But what constitution can we give to our Indian Empire which shall not be strange, which shall not be anomalous? That Empire is itself the strangest of all political anomalies. That a handful of adventurers from an island in the Atlantic should have subjugated a vast country divided from the place of their birth by half the globe; a country which at no very distant period was merely the subject of fable to the nations of Europe; a country never before violated by the most renowned of Western conquerors; a country which Trajan never entered; a country lying beyond the point where the phalanx of Alexander refused to proceed; that we should govern a territory ten thousand miles from us, a territory larger and more populous than France, Spain, Italy, and Germany put together, a territory, the present clear revenue of which exceeds the present clear revenue of any state in the world, France excepted; a territory inhabited by men differing from us in race, colour, language, manners, morals, religion; these are prodigies to which the world has seen nothing similar. Reason is confounded. We interrogate the past in vain. General rules are useless where the whole is one vast exception. The Company is an anomaly; but it is part of a system where every thing is anomaly. It is the strangest of all governments; but it is designed for the strangest of all empires.

If we discard the Company, we must find a substitute: and, take what substitute we may, we shall find ourselves unable to give any reason for believing that the body which we have put in the room of the Company is likely to acquit itself of its duties better than the Company. Commissioners appointed by the King during pleasure would be no check on the Crown; Commissioners appointed by the King or by Parliament for life would always be appointed by the political party which might be uppermost, and if a change of administration took place, would harass the new Government with the most vexatious opposition. The plan suggested by the right honourable Gentleman, the Member for Montgomeryshire,* is I think the very worst that I have ever heard. He would have Directors nominated every four years by the Crown. Is it not plain that these Directors would always be appointed from among the supporters of the Ministry for the time being; that their situations would depend on the permanence of that Ministry; that therefore all their power and patronage would be employed for the purpose of propping that Ministry, and, in case of a change, for the purpose of molesting those who might succeed to power; that they would be subservient while their friends were in, and factious when their friends were out? How would Lord Grey's Ministry have been situated if the whole body of Directors had been nominated by the Duke of Wellington in 1830. I mean no imputation on the Duke of Wellington. If the present ministers had to nominate Directors for four years, they would, I have no doubt, nominate men who would give no small trouble to the Duke of Wellington if he were to return to office. What we want is a body independent of the Government, and no more than independent; not a tool of the Treasury, not a tool of the opposition. No new plan which I have heard proposed would give us such a body. The Company, strange as its constitution may be, is such a body. It is, as a corporation, neither Whig nor Tory, neither high-church nor low-church. It cannot be charged with having been for or against the Catholic Bill, for or against the Reform Bill. It has constantly acted with a view not to English politics, but to Indian politics. We have seen the country convulsed by faction. We have seen Ministers driven from office by this House, Parliament dissolved in anger, general elections of unprecedented turbulence, debates of unprecedented interest. We have seen the two branches of the Legislature placed in direct opposition to each other. We have seen the advisers of the Crown dismissed one day, and brought back the next day on the shoulders of the people. And amidst all these agitating events the Company has preserved strict and unsuspected neutrality. This is, I think an inestimable advantage, and it is an advantage which we must altogether forego, if we consent to adopt any of the schemes which I have heard proposed on the other side of the House.

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* Mr Charles Wynn.

We must judge of the Indian government, as of all other governments, by its practical effects. According to the honourable Member for Sheffield, India is ill governed; and the whole fault is with the Company. Innumerable accusations, great and small, are brought by him against the Directors. They are fond of war: they are fond of dominion: the taxation is burthensome: the laws are undigested: the roads are rough: the post goes on foot: and for everything the Company is answerable. From the dethronement of the Mogul princes to the mishaps of Sir Charles Metcalfe's courier, every disaster that has taken place in the East during sixty years is laid to the charge of this Corporation. And the inference is, that all the power which they possess ought to be taken out of their hands, and transferred at once to the Crown.

Now, Sir, it seems to me that, for all the evils which the honourable Gentleman has so pathetically recounted, the Ministers of the Crown are as much to blame as the Company; nay, much more so: for the Board of Control could, without the consent of the Directors, have redressed those evils; and the Directors most certainly could not have redressed them without the consent of the Board of Control. Take the case of that frightful grievance which seems to have made the deepest impression on the mind of the honourable Gentleman, the slowness of the mail. Why, Sir, if my right honourable friend, the President of our Board thought fit, he might direct me to write to the Court and require them to frame a dispatch on that subject. If the Court disobeyed, he might himself frame a dispatch ordering Lord William Bentinck to put the dawks all over Bengal on horseback. If the Court refused to send out this dispatch, the Board could apply to the King's Bench for a mandamus. If, on the other hand, the Directors wished to accelerate the journeys of the mail, and the Board were adverse to the project, the Directors could do nothing at all. For all measures of internal policy the servants of the King are at least as deeply responsible as the Company. For all measures of foreign policy the servants of the King, and they alone are responsible. I was surprised to hear the honourable Gentleman accuse the Directors of insatiable ambition and rapacity, when he must know that no act of aggression on any native state can be committed by the Company without the sanction of the Board, and that, in fact, the Board has repeatedly approved of warlike measures which were strenuously opposed by the Company. He must know, in particular, that, during the energetic and splendid administration of the Marquess of Wellesley, the company was all for peace, and the Board all for conquest. If a line of conduct which the honourable Gentleman thinks unjustifiable has been followed by the Ministers of the Crown in spite of the remonstrances of the Directors, this is surely a strange reason for turning off the Directors, and giving the whole power unchecked to the Crown.

The honourable Member tells us that India, under the present system, is not so rich and flourishing as she was two hundred years ago. Really, Sir, I doubt whether we are in possession of sufficient data to enable us to form a judgment on that point. But the matter is of little importance. We ought to compare India under our government, not with India under Acbar and his immediate successors, but with India as we found it. The calamities through which that country passed during the interval between the fall of the Mogul power and the establishment of the English supremacy were sufficient to throw the people back whole centuries. It would surely be unjust to say, that Alfred was a bad king because Britain, under his government, was not so rich or so civilised as in the time of the Romans.

In what state, then, did we find India? And what have we made India? We found society throughout that vast country in a state to which history scarcely furnishes a parallel. The nearest parallel would, perhaps, be the state of Europe during the fifth century. The Mogul empire in the time of the successors of Aurungzebe, like the Roman empire in the time of the successors of Theodosius, was sinking under the vices of a bad internal administration, and under the assaults of barbarous invaders. At Delhi, as at Ravenna, there was a mock sovereign, immured in a gorgeous state prison. He was suffered to indulge in every sensual pleasure. He was adored with servile prostrations. He assumed and bestowed the most magnificent titles. But, in fact, he was a mere puppet in the hands of some ambitious subject. While the Honorii and Augustuli of the East, surrounded by their fawning eunuchs, revelled and dozed without knowing or caring what might pass beyond the walls of their palace gardens, the provinces had ceased to respect a government which could neither punish nor protect them. Society was a chaos. Its restless and shifting elements formed themselves every moment into some new combination, which the next moment dissolved. In the course of a single generation a hundred dynasties grew up, flourished, decayed, were extinguished, were forgotten. Every adventurer who could muster a troop of horse might aspire to a throne. Every palace was every year the scene of conspiracies, treasons, revolutions, parricides. Meanwhile a rapid succession of Alarics and Attilas passed over the defenceless empire. A Persian invader penetrated to Delhi, and carried back in triumph the most precious treasures of the House of Tamerlane. The Afghan soon followed by the same track, to glean whatever the Persian had spared. The Jauts established themselves on the Jumna. The Seiks devastated Lahore. Every part of India, from Tanjore to the Himalayas, was laid under contribution by the Mahrattas. The people were ground down to the dust by the oppressor without and the oppressor within, by the robber from whom the Nabob was unable to protect them, by the Nabob who took whatever the robber had left to them. All the evils of despotism, and all the evils of anarchy, pressed at once on that miserable race. They knew nothing of government but its exactions. Desolation was in their imperial cities, and famine all along the banks of their broad and redundant rivers. It seemed that a few more years would suffice to efface all traces of the opulence and civilisation of an earlier age.

Such was the state of India when the Company began to take part in the disputes of its ephemeral sovereigns. About eighty years have elapsed since we appeared as auxiliaries in a contest between two rival families for the sovereignty of a small corner of the Peninsula. From that moment commenced a great, a stupendous process, the reconstruction of a decomposed society. Two generations have passed away; and the process is complete. The scattered fragments of the empire of Aurungzebe have been united in an empire stronger and more closely knit together than that which Aurungzebe ruled. The power of the new sovereigns penetrates their dominions more completely, and is far more implicitly obeyed, than was that of the proudest princes of the Mogul dynasty.

It is true that the early history of this great revolution is chequered with guilt and shame. It is true that the founders of our Indian Empire too often abused the strength which they derived from superior energy and superior knowledge. It is true that, with some of the highest qualities of the race from which they sprang, they combined some of the worst defects of the race over which they ruled. How should it have been otherwise? Born in humble stations, accustomed to earn a slender maintenance by obscure industry, they found themselves transformed in a few months from clerks drudging over desks, or captains in marching regiments, into statesmen and generals, with armies at their command, with the revenues of kingdoms at their disposal, with power to make and depose sovereigns at their pleasure. They were what it was natural that men should be who had been raised by so rapid an ascent to so dizzy an eminence, profuse and rapacious, imperious and corrupt.

It is true, then, that there was too much foundation for the representations of those satirists and dramatists who held up the character of the English Nabob to the derision and hatred of a former generation. It is true that some disgraceful intrigues, some unjust and cruel wars, some instances of odious perfidy and avarice, stain the annals of our Eastern Empire. It is true that the duties of government and legislation were long wholly neglected or carelessly performed. It is true that when the conquerors at length began to apply themselves in earnest to the discharge of their high functions, they committed the errors natural to rulers who were but imperfectly acquainted with the language and manners of their subjects. It is true that some plans, which were dictated by the purest and most benevolent feelings have not been attended by the desired success. It is true that India suffers to this day from a heavy burden of taxation and from a defective system of law. It is true, I fear, that in those states which are connected with us by subsidiary alliance, all the evils of oriental despotism have too frequently shown themselves in their most loathsome and destructive form.

All this is true. Yet in the history and in the present state of our Indian Empire I see ample reason for exultation and for a good hope.

I see that we have established order where we found confusion. I see that the petty dynasties which were generated by the corruption of the great Mahometan Empire, and which, a century ago, kept all India in constant agitation, have been quelled by one overwhelming power. I see that the predatory tribes, which, in the middle of the last century, passed annually over the harvests of India with the destructive rapidity of a hurricane, have quailed before the valour of a braver and sterner race, have been vanquished, scattered, hunted to their strongholds, and either extirpated by the English sword, or compelled to exchange the pursuits of rapine for those of industry.

I look back for many years; and I see scarcely a trace of the vices which blemished the splendid fame of the first conquerors of Bengal. I see peace studiously preserved. I see faith inviolably maintained towards feeble and dependent states. I see confidence gradually infused into the minds of suspicious neighbours. I see the horrors of war mitigated by the chivalrous and Christian spirit of Europe. I see examples of moderation and clemency, such as I should seek in vain in the annals of any other victorious and dominant nation. I see captive tyrants, whose treachery and cruelty might have excused a severe retribution, living in security, comfort, and dignity, under the protection of the government which they laboured to destroy.

I see a large body of civil and military functionaries resembling in nothing but capacity and valour those adventurers who, seventy years ago, came hither, laden with wealth and infamy, to parade before our fathers the plundered treasures of Bengal and Tanjore. I reflect with pride that to the doubtful splendour which surrounds the memory of Hastings and of Clive, we can oppose the spotless glory of Elphinstone and Munro. I contemplate with reverence and delight the honourable poverty which is the evidence of rectitude firmly maintained amidst strong temptations. I rejoice to see my countrymen, after ruling millions of subjects, after commanding victorious armies, after dictating terms of peace at the gates of hostile capitals, after administering the revenues of great provinces, after judging the causes of wealthy Zemindars, after residing at the courts of tributary Kings, return to their native land with no more than a decent competence.

I see a government anxiously bent on the public good. Even in its errors I recognise a paternal feeling towards the great people committed to its charge. I see toleration strictly maintained: yet I see bloody and degrading superstitions gradually losing their power. I see the morality, the philosophy, the taste of Europe, beginning to produce a salutary effect on the hearts and understandings of our subjects. I see the public mind of India, that public mind which we found debased and contracted by the worst forms of political and religious tyranny, expanding itself to just and noble views of the ends of government and of the social duties of man.

I see evils: but I see the government actively employed in the work of remedying those evils. The taxation is heavy; but the work of retrenchment is unsparingly pursued. The mischiefs arising from the system of subsidiary alliance are great: but the rulers of India are fully aware of those mischiefs, and are engaged in guarding against them. Wherever they now interfere for the purpose of supporting a native government, they interfere also for the purpose of reforming it.

Seeing these things, then, am I prepared to discard the Company as an organ of government? I am not. Assuredly I will never shrink from innovation where I see reason to believe that innovation will be improvement. That the present Government does not shrink from innovations which it considers as improvements the bill now before the House sufficiently shows. But surely the burden of the proof lies on the innovators. They are bound to show that there is a fair probability of obtaining some advantage before they call upon us to take up the foundations of the Indian government. I have no superstitious veneration for the Court of Directors or the Court of Proprietors. Find me a better Council: find me a better constituent body: and I am ready for a change. But of all the substitutes for the Company which have hitherto been suggested, not one has been proved to be better than the Company; and most of them I could, I think, easily prove to be worse. Circumstances might force us to hazard a change. If the Company were to refuse to accept of the government unless we would grant pecuniary terms which I thought extravagant, or unless we gave up the clauses in this bill which permit Europeans to hold landed property and natives to hold office, I would take them at their word. But I will not discard them in the mere rage of experiment.

Do I call the government of India a perfect government? Very far from it. No nation can be perfectly well governed till it is competent to govern itself. I compare the Indian government with other governments of the same class, with despotisms, with military despotisms, with foreign military despotisms ; and I find none that approaches it in excellence. I compare it with the government of the Roman provinces, with the government of the Spanish colonies ; and I am proud of my country and my age. Here are a hundred millions of people under the absolute rule of a few strangers, differing from them physically, differing from them morally, mere Mamelukes, not born in the country which they rule, not meaning to lay their bones in it. If you require me to make this government as good as that of England, France, or the United States of America, I own frankly that I can do no such thing. Reasoning *a priori*, I should have come to the conclusion that such a government must be a horrible tyranny. It is a source of constant amazement to me that it is so good as I find it to be. I will not, therefore, in a case in which I have neither principles nor precedents to guide me, pull down the existing system on account of its theoretical defects. For I know that any system which I could put in its place would be equally condemned by theory, while it would not be equally sanctioned by experience.

Some change in the constitution of the Company was, as I have shown, rendered inevitable by the opening of the China Trade ; and it was the duty of the Government to take care that the change should not be prejudicial to India. There were many ways in which the compromise between commerce and territory might have been effected. We might have taken the assets, and paid a sum down, leaving the Company to invest that sum as they chose. We might have offered English security with a lower interest. We might have taken the course which the late ministers designed to take. They would have left the Company in possession of the means of carrying on its trade in competition with private merchants. My firm belief is that, if this course had been taken, the Company must, in a very few years, have abandoned the trade, or the trade would have ruined the Company. It was not, however, solely or principally by regard for the interest of the Company, or of English merchants generally, that the Government was guided on this occasion. The course which appeared to us the most likely to promote the interests of our Eastern Empire was to make the proprietors of India stock creditors of the Indian territory. Their interest will thus be in a great measure the same with the interest of the people whom they are to rule. Their income will depend on the revenues of their empire. The revenues of their empire will depend on the manner in which the affairs of that empire are administered. We furnish them with the strongest motives to watch over the interests of the cultivator and the trader, to maintain peace, to carry on with vigour the work of retrenchment, to detect and punish extortion and corruption. Though they live at a distance from India, though few of them have ever seen or may ever see the people whom they rule, they will have a great stake in the happiness of their subjects. If their misgovernment should produce disorder in the finances, they will themselves feel the effects of that disorder in their own household expenses. I believe this to be, next to a representative constitution, the constitution which is the best security for good government. A representative constitution India cannot at present have. And we have therefore, I think, given her the best constitution of which she is capable.

One word as to the new arrangement which we propose with respect to the patronage. It is intended to introduce the principle of competition in the disposal of writerships ; and from this change I cannot but anticipate the happiest results. The civil servants of the Company are undoubtedly a highly respectable body of men ; and in that body, as in every large body, there are some persons of very eminent ability. I rejoice most cordially to see this. I rejoice to see that the standard of morality is so high in England, that intelligence is so generally diffused through England, that young persons who are taken from the mass of society, by favour and not by merit, and who are therefore only fair samples of the mass, should, when placed in situations of high importance, be so seldom found wanting. But it is not the less true that India is entitled to the service of the best talents which England can spare. That the average of intelligence and virtue is very high in this country is matter for honest exultation. But it is no reason for employing average men where you can obtain superior men. Consider too, Sir, how rapidly the public mind of India is advancing, how much attention is already paid by the higher classes of the natives to those intellectual pursuits on the cultivation of which the superiority of the European race to the rest of mankind principally depends. Surely, in such circumstances, from motives of selfish policy, if from no higher motive, we ought to fill the magistracies of our Eastern Empire with men who may do honour to their country, with men who may represent the best part of the English nation. This, Sir, is our object; and we believe that by the plan which is now proposed this object will be attained. It is proposed that for every vacancy in the civil service four candidates shall be named, and the best candidate selected by examination. We conceive that, under this system, the persons sent out will be young men above par, young men superior either in talents or in diligence to the mass. It is said, I know, that examinations in Latin, in Greek, and in mathematics, are no tests of what men will prove to be in life. I am perfectly aware that they are not infallible tests: but that they are tests I confidently maintain. Look at every walk of life, at this House, at the other House, at the Bar, at the Bench, at the Church, and see whether it be not true that those who attain high distinction in the world were generally men who were distinguished in their academic career. Indeed, Sir, this objection would prove far too much even for those who use it. It would prove that there is no use at all in education. Why should we put boys out of their way? Why should we force a lad, who would much rather fly a kite or trundle a hoop, to learn his Latin Grammar? Why should we keep a young man to his Thucydides or his Laplace, when he would much rather be shooting? Education would be mere useless torture, if, at two or three and twenty, a man who had neglected his studies were exactly on a par with a man who had applied himself to them, exactly as likely to perform all the offices of public life with credit to himself and with advantage to society. Whether the English system of education be good or bad is not now the question. Perhaps I may think that too much time is given to the ancient languages and to the abstract sciences. But what then? Whatever be the languages, whatever be the sciences, which it is, in any age or country, the fashion to teach, the persons who become the greatest proficients in those languages and those sciences will generally be the flower of the youth, the most acute, the most industrious, the most ambitious of honourable distinctions. If the Ptolemaic system were taught at Cambridge instead of the Newtonian, the senior wrangler would nevertheless be in general a superior man to the wooden spoon. If, instead of learning Greek, we learned the Cherokee, the man who understood the Cherokee best, who made the most correct and melodious Cherokee verses, who comprehended most accurately the effect of the Cherokee particles, would generally be a superior man to him who was destitute of these accomplishments. If astrology were taught at our Universities, the young man who cast nativities best would generally turn out a superior man. If alchymy were taught, the young man who showed most activity in the pursuit of the philosopher's stone would generally turn out a superior man.

I will only add one other observation on this subject. Although I am inclined to think that too exclusive an attention is paid in the education of young English gentlemen to the dead languages, I conceive that when you are choosing men to fill situations for which the very first and most indispensable qualification is familiarity with foreign languages, it would be difficult to find a better test of their fitness than their classical acquirements.

Some persons have expressed doubts as to the possibility of procuring fair examinations. I am quite sure that no person who has been either at Cambridge or at Oxford can entertain such doubts. I feel, indeed, that I ought to apologise for even noticing an objection so frivolous.

Next to the opening of the China trade, Sir, the change most eagerly demanded by the English people was, that the restrictions on the admission of Europeans to India should be removed. In this change there are undoubtedly very great advantages. The chief advantage is, I think, the improvement which the minds of our native subjects may be expected to derive from free intercourse with a people far advanced beyond themselves in intellectual cultivation. I cannot deny, however, that the advantages are attended with some danger.

The danger is that the new comers, belonging to the ruling nation, resembling in colour, in language, in manners, those who hold supreme military and political power, and differing in all these respects from the great mass of the population, may consider themselves as a superior class, and may trample on the indigenous race. Hitherto there have been strong restraints on Europeans resident in India. Licenses were not easily obtained. Those residents who were in the service of the Company had obvious motives for conducting themselves with propriety. If they incurred the serious displeasure of the Government, their hopes of promotion were blighted. Even those who were not in the public service were subject to the formidable power which the Government possessed of banishing them at its pleasure.

The license of the Government will now no longer be necessary to persons who desire to reside in the settled provinces of India. The power of arbitrary deportation is withdrawn. Unless, therefore, we mean to leave the natives exposed to the tyranny and insolence of every profligate adventurer who may visit the East, we must place the European under the same power which legislates for the Hindoo. No man loves political freedom more than I. But a privilege enjoyed by a few individuals, in the midst of a vast population who do not enjoy it, ought not to be called freedom. It is tyranny. In the West Indies I have not the least doubt that the existence of the Trial by Jury and of Legislative Assemblies has tended to make the condition of the slaves worse than it would otherwise have been. Or, to go to India itself for an instance, though I fully believe that a mild penal code is better than a severe penal code, the worst of all systems was surely that of having a mild code for the Brahmins, who sprang from the head of the Creator, while there was a severe code for the Sudras, who sprang from his feet. India has suffered enough already from the distinction of castes, and from the deeply rooted prejudices which that distinction has engendered.

God forbid that we should inflict on her the curse of a new caste, that we should send her a new breed of Brahmins, authorised to treat all the native population as Parias !

With a view to the prevention of this evil, we propose to give to the Supreme Government the power of legislating for Europeans as well as for natives. We propose that the regulations of the Government shall bind the King's Court as they bind all other courts, and that registration by the Judges of the King's Courts shall no longer be necessary to give validity to those regulations within the towns of Calcutta, Madras, and Bombay.

I could scarcely, Sir, believe my ears when I heard this part of our plan condemned in another place. I should have thought that it would have been received with peculiar favour in that quarter where it has met with the most severe condemnation. What, at present, is the case? If the Supreme Court and the Government differ on a question of jurisdiction, or on a question of legislation within the towns which are the seats of Government, there is absolutely no umpire but the Imperial Parliament. The device of putting one wild elephant between two tame elephants was ingenious : but it may not always be practicable. Suppose a tame elephant between two wild elephants, or suppose that the whole herd should run wild together. The thing is not without example. And is it not most unjust and ridiculous that, on one side of a ditch, the edict of the Governor General should have the force of law, and that on the other side it should be of no effect unless registered by the Judges of the Supreme Court? If the registration be a security for good legislation, we are bound to give that security to all classes of our subjects. If the registration be not a security for good legislation, why give it to any? Is the system good? Extend it. Is it bad! Abolish it. But in the name of common sense do not leave it as it is. It is as absurd as our old law of sanctuary. The law which authorises imprisonment for debt may be good or bad. But no man in his senses can approve of the ancient system under which a debtor who might be arrested in Fleet Street was safe as soon as he had scampered into Whitefriars. Just in the same way, doubts may fairly be entertained about the expediency of allowing four or five persons to make laws for India ; but to allow them to make laws for all India without the Mahratta ditch, and to except Calcutta, is the height of absurdity.

I say, therefore, that either you must enlarge the power of the Supreme Court, and give it a general veto on laws, or you must enlarge the power of the Government, and make its regulations binding on all Courts without distinction. The former course no person has ventured to propose. To the latter course objections have been made ; but objections which to me, I must own, seem altogether frivolous.

It is acknowledged that of late years inconvenience has arisen from the relation in which the Supreme Court stands to the Government. But, it is said, that Court was originally instituted for the protection of natives against Europeans. The wise course would therefore be to restore its original character.

Now, Sir, the fact is, that the Supreme Court has never been so mischievous as during the first ten years of its power, or so respectable as it has lately been. Everybody who knows anything of its early history knows, that, during a considerable time, it was the terror of Bengal, the scourge of the native population, the screen of European delinquents, a convenient tool of the Government for all purposes of evil, an insurmountable obstacle to the Government in all undertakings for the public good; that its proceedings were made up of pedantry, cruelty, and corruption; that its disputes with the Government were at one time on the point of breaking up the whole fabric of society; and that a convulsion was averted only by the dexterous policy of Warren Hastings, who at last bought off the opposition of the Chief Justice for eight thousand pounds a year. It is notorious that, while the Supreme Court opposed Hastings in all his best measures, it was a thoroughgoing accomplice in his worst; that it took part in the most scandalous of those proceedings which, fifty years ago, roused the indignation of Parliament and of the country; that it assisted in the spoliation of the princesses of Oude; that it passed sentence of death on Nuncomar. And this is the Court which we are to restore from its present state of degeneracy to its original purity. This is the protection which we are to give to the natives against the Europeans. Sir, so far is it from being true that the character of the Supreme Court has deteriorated, that it has, perhaps, improved more than any other institution in India. But the evil lies deep in the nature of the institution itself. The judges have in our time deserved the greatest respect. Their judgment and integrity have done much to mitigate the vices of the system. The worst charge that can be brought against any of them is that of pertinacity, disinterested, conscientious pertinacity, in error. The real evil is the state of the law. You have two supreme powers in India. There is no arbitrator except a Legislature fifteen thousand miles off. Such a system is on the face of it an absurdity in politics. My wonder is, not that this system has several times been on the point of producing fatal consequences to the peace and resources of India;—those, I think, are the words in which Warren Hastings described the effect of the contest between his Government and the Judges;—but that it has not actually produced such consequences. The most distinguished members of the Indian Government, the most distinguished Judges of the Supreme Court, call upon you to reform this system. Sir Charles Metcalfe, Sir Charles Grey, represent with equal urgency the expediency of having one single paramount council armed with legislative power. The admission of Europeans to India renders it absolutely necessary not to delay our decision. The effect of that admission would be to raise a hundred questions, to produce a hundred contests between the Council and the judicature. The Government would be paralysed at the precise moment at which all its energy was required. While the two equal powers were acting in opposite directions, the whole machine of the state would stand still. The Europeans would be uncontrolled. The natives would be unprotected. The consequences I will not pretend to foresee. Everything beyond is darkness and confusion.

Having given to the Government supreme legislative power, we next propose to give to it for a time the assistance of a commission for the purpose of digesting and reforming the laws of India, so that those laws may, as soon as possible, be formed into a Code. Gentlemen of whom I wish to speak with the highest respect have expressed a doubt whether India be at present in a fit state to receive a benefit which is not yet enjoyed by this free and highly civilised country. Sir, I can allow to this argument very little weight beyond that which it derives from the personal authority of those who use it. For, in the first place, our freedom and our high civilisation make this improvement, desirable as it must always be, less indispensably necessary to us than to our Indian subjects; and in the next place, our freedom and civilisation, I fear, make it far more difficult for us to obtain this benefit for ourselves than to bestow it on them.

I believe that no country ever stood so much in need of a code of laws as India; and I believe also that there never was a country in which the want might so easily be supplied. I said that there were many points of analogy between the state of that country after the fall of the Mogul power, and the state of Europe after the fall of the Roman empire. In one respect the analogy is very striking. As there were in Europe then, so there are in India now, several systems of law widely differing from each other, but coexisting and coequal. The indigenous population has its own laws. Each of the successive races of conquerors has brought with it its own peculiar jurisprudence: the Mussulman his Koran and the innumerable commentators on the Koran; the Englishman his Statute Book and his Term Reports. As there were established in Italy, at one and the same time, the Roman Law, the Lombard law, the Ripuarian law, the Bavarian law, and the Salic law, so we have now in our Eastern empire Hindoo law, Mahometan law, Parsee law, English law, perpetually mingling with each other and disturbing each other, varying with the person, varying with the place. In one and the same cause the process and pleadings are in the fashion of one nation, the judgment is according to the laws of another. An issue is evolved according to the rules of Westminster, and decided according to those of Benares. The only Mahometan book in the nature of a code is the Koran; the only Hindoo book, the Institutes. Everybody who knows those books knows that they provide for a very small part of the cases which must arise in every community. All beyond them is comment and tradition. Our regulations in civil matters do not define rights, but merely establish remedies. If a point of Hindoo law arises, the Judge calls on the Pundit for an opinion. If a point of Mahometan law arises, the Judge applies to the Cauzee. What the integrity of these functionaries is, we may learn from Sir William Jones. That eminent man declared that he could not answer it to his conscience to decide any point of law on the faith of a Hindoo expositor. Sir Thomas Strange confirms this declaration. Even if there were no suspicion of corruption on the part of the interpreters of the law, the science which they profess is in such a state of confusion that no reliance can be placed on their answers. Sir Francis Macnaghten tells us, that it is a delusion to fancy that there is any known and fixed law under which the Hindoo people live; that texts may be produced on any side of any question; that expositors equal in authority perpetually contradict each other: that the obsolete law is perpetually confounded with the law actually in force; and that the first lesson to be impressed on a functionary who has to administer Hindoo law is that it is vain to think of extracting certainty from the books of the jurist. The consequence is that in practice the decisions of the tribunals are altogether arbitrary. What is administered is not law, but a kind of rude and capricious equity. I asked an able and excellent judge lately returned from India how one of our Zillah Courts would decide several legal questions of great importance, questions not involving considerations of religion or of caste, mere questions of commercial law. He told me that it was a mere lottery. He knew how he should himself decide them. But he knew nothing more. I asked a most distinguished civil servant of the Company, with reference to the clause in this Bill on the subject of slavery, whether at present, if a dancing girl ran away from her master, the judge would force her to go back. "Some judges," he said, "send a girl back.

Others set her at liberty. The whole is a mere matter of chance. Everything depends on the temper of the individual judge."

Even in this country we have had complaints of judge-made law; even in this country, where the standard of morality is higher than in almost any other part of the world; where, during several generations, not one depositary of our legal traditions has incurred the suspicion of personal corruption; where there are popular institutions; where every decision is watched by a shrewd and learned audience; where there is an intelligent and observant public; where every remarkable case is fully reported in a hundred newspapers; where, in short, there is everything which can mitigate the evils of such a system. But judge-made law, where there is an absolute government and a lax morality, where there is no bar and no public, is a curse and a scandal not to be endured. It is time that the magistrate should know what law he is to administer, that the subject should know under what law he is to live. We do not mean that all the people of India should live under the same law: far from it: there is not a word in the bill, there was not a word in my right honourable friend's speech, susceptible of such an interpretation. We know how desirable that object is; but we also know that it is unattainable. We know that respect must be paid to feelings generated by differences of religion, of nation, and of caste. Much, I am persuaded, may be done to assimilate the different systems of law without wounding those feelings. But, whether we assimilate those systems or not, let us ascertain them; let us digest them. We propose no rash innovation; we wish to give no shock to the prejudices of any part of our subjects. Our principle is simply this; uniformity where you can have it: diversity where you must have it; but in all cases certainty.

As I believe that India stands more in need of a code than any other country in the world, I believe also that there is no country on which that great benefit can more easily be conferred. A code is almost the only blessing, perhaps it is the only blessing, which absolute governments are better fitted to confer on a nation than popular governments. The work of digesting a vast and artificial system of unwritten jurisprudence is far more easily performed, and far better performed, by few minds than by many, by a Napoleon than by a Chamber of Deputies and a Chamber of Peers, by a government like that of Prussia or Denmark than by a government like that of England. A quiet knot of two or three veteran jurists is an infinitely better machinery for such a purpose than a large popular assembly divided, as such assemblies almost always are, into adverse factions. This seems to me, therefore, to be precisely that point of time at which the advantage of a complete written code of laws may most easily be conferred on India. It is a work which cannot be well performed in an age of barbarism, which cannot without great difficulty be performed in an age of freedom. It is a work which especially belongs to a government like that of India, to an enlightened and paternal despotism.

I have detained the House so long, Sir, that I will defer what I had to say on some parts of this measure, important parts, indeed, but far less important, as I think, than those to which I have adverted, till we are in Committee. There is, however, one part of the bill on which, after what has recently passed elsewhere, I feel myself irresistibly impelled to say a few words. I allude to that wise, that benevolent, that noble clause which enacts that no native of our Indian empire shall, by reason of his colour, his descent, or his religion, be incapable of holding office. At the risk of being called by that nickname which is regarded as the most opprobrious of all nicknames by men of selfish hearts and contracted minds, at the risk of being called a philosopher, I must say that, to the last day of my life, I shall be proud of having been one of those who assisted in the framing of the bill which contains that clause. We are told that the time can never come when the natives of India can be admitted to high civil and military office. We are told that this is the condition on which we hold our power. We are told that we are bound to confer on our subjects every benefit—which they are capable of enjoying?—no;—which it is in our power to confer on them?—no;—but which we can confer on them without hazard to the perpetuity of our own domination. Against that proposition I solemnly protest as inconsistent alike with sound policy and sound morality.

I am far, very far, from wishing to proceed hastily in this most delicate matter. I feel that, for the good of India itself, the admission of natives to high office must be effected by slow degrees. But that, when the fulness of time is come, when the interest of India requires the change, we ought to refuse to make that change lest we should endanger our own power, this is a doctrine of which I cannot think without indignation. Governments, like men, may buy existence too dear. "Propter vitam vivendi perdere causas," is a despicable policy both in individuals and in states. In the present case, such a policy would be not only despicable, but absurd. The mere extent of empire is not necessarily an advantage. To many governments it has been cumbersome; to some it has been fatal. It will be allowed by every statesman of our time that the prosperity of a community is made up of the prosperity of those who compose the community, and that it is the most childish ambition to covet dominion which adds to no man's comfort or security. To the great trading nation, to the great manufacturing nation, no progress which any portion of the human race can make in knowledge, in taste for the conveniences of life, or in the wealth by which those conveniences are produced, can be matter of indifference. It is scarcely possible to calculate the benefits which we might derive from the diffusion of European civilisation among the vast population of the East. It would be, on the most selfish view of the case, far better for us that the people of India were well governed and independent of us, than ill governed and subject to us; that they were ruled by their own kings, but wearing our broadcloth, and working with our cutlery, than that they were performing their salams to English collectors and English magistrates, but were too ignorant to value, or too poor to buy, English manufactures. To trade with civilised men is infinitely more profitable than to govern savages. That would, indeed, be a doting wisdom, which, in order that India might remain a dependency, would make it an useless and costly dependency, which would keep a hundred millions of men from being our customers in order that they might continue to be our slaves.

It was, as Bernier tells us, the practice of the miserable tyrants whom he found in India, when they dreaded the capacity and spirit of some distinguished subject, and yet could not venture to murder him, to administer to him a daily dose of the pousta, a preparation of opium, the effect of which was in a few months to destroy all the bodily and mental powers of the wretch who was drugged with it, and to turn him into a helpless idiot. The detestable artifice, more horrible than assassination itself, was worthy of those who employed it. It is no model for the English nation. We shall never consent to administer the pousta to a whole community, to stupefy and paralyse a great people whom God has committed to our charge, for the wretched purpose of rendering them more amenable to our control. What is power worth if it is founded on vice, on ignorance, and on misery ; if we can hold it only by violating the most sacred duties which as governors we owe to the governed, and which, as a people blessed with far more than an ordinary measure of political liberty and of intellectual light, we owe to a race debased by three thousand years of despotism and priestcraft? We are free, we are civilised, to little purpose, if we grudge to any portion of the human race an equal measure of freedom and civilisation.

Are we to keep the people of India ignorant in order that we may keep them submissive? Or do we think that we can give them knowledge without awakening ambition? Or do we mean to awaken ambition and to provide it with no legitimate vent? Who will answer any of these questions in the affirmative? Yet one of them must be answered in the affirmative, by every person who maintains that we ought permanently to exclude the natives from high office. I have no fears. The path of duty is plain before us : and it is also the path of wisdom, of national prosperity, of national honour.

The destinies of our Indian empire are covered with thick darkness. It is difficult to form any conjecture as to the fate reserved for a state which resembles no other in history, and which forms by itself a separate class of political phenomena. The laws which regulate its growth and its decay are still unknown to us. It may be that the public mind of India may expand under our system till it has outgrown that system ; that by good government we may educate our subjects into a capacity for better government ; that, having become instructed in European knowledge, they may, in some future age, demand European institutions. Whether such a day will ever come I know not. But never will I attempt to avert or to retard it. Whenever it comes, it will be the proudest day in English history. To have found a great people sunk in the lowest depths of slavery and superstition, to have so ruled them as to have made them desirous and capable of all the privileges of citizens, would indeed be a title to glory all our own. The sceptre may pass away from us. Unforeseen accidents may derange our most profound schemes of policy. Victory may be inconstant to our arms. But there are triumphs which are followed by no reverse. There is an empire exempt from all natural causes of decay. Those triumphs are the pacific triumphs of reason over barbarism ; that empire is the imperishable empire of our arts and our morals, our literature and our laws.

A SPEECH

Delivered at Edinburgh on the 29th of May 1839.

The elevation of Mr Abercromby to the peerage in May 1839, caused a vacancy in the representation of the city of Edinburgh. A meeting of the electors was called to consider of the manner in which the vacancy should be supplied. At this meeting the following Speech was made.

My Lord Provost and Gentlemen,—At the request of a very large and respectable portion of your body, I appear before you as a candidate for a high and solemn trust, which, uninvited, I should have thought it presumption to solicit, but which, thus invited, I should think it cowardice to decline. If I had felt myself justified in following my own inclinations, I am not sure that even a summons so honourable as that which I have received would have been sufficient to draw me away from pursuits far better suited to my taste and temper than the turmoil of political warfare. But I feel that my lot is cast in times in which no man is free to judge, merely according to his own taste and temper, whether he will devote himself to active or to contemplative life ; in times in which society has a right to demand, from every one of its members, active and strenuous exertions. I have, therefore, obeyed your call ; and I now present myself before you for the purpose of offering to you, not, what I am sure you would reject with disdain, flattery, degrading alike to a candidate, and to a constituent body ; but such reasonable, candid, and manly explanations as become the mouth of a free man ambitious of the confidence of a free people.

It is hardly necessary for me to say that I stand here unconnected with this great community. It would be mere affectation not to acknowledge that with respect to local questions I have much to learn ; but I hope that you will find in me no sluggish or inattentive learner. From an early age I have felt a strong interest in Edinburgh, although attached to Edinburgh by no other ties than those which are common to me with multitudes ; that tie which attaches every man of Scottish blood to the ancient and renowned capital of our race ; that tie which attaches every student of history to the spot ennobled by so many great and memorable events ; that tie which attaches every traveller of taste to the most beautiful of British cities ; and that tie which attaches every lover of literature to a place which, since it has ceased to be the seat of empire, has derived from poetry, philosophy, and eloquence a far higher distinction than empire can bestow. If to those ties it shall now be your pleasure to add a tie still closer and more peculiar, I can only assure you that it shall be the study of my life so to conduct myself in these our troubled times that you may have no reason to be ashamed of your choice.

Those gentlemen who invited me to appear as a candidate before you were doubtless acquainted with the part which I took in public affairs during the three first Parliaments of the late King. Circumstances have since that time undergone great alteration ; but no alteration has taken place in my principles. I do not mean to say that thought, discussion, and the new phenomena produced by the operation of a new representative system, have not led me to modify some of my views on questions of detail; but, with respect to the fundamental principles of government, my opinions are still what they were when, in 1831 and 1832, I took part, according to the measure of my abilities, in that great pacific victory which purified the representative system of England, and which first gave a real representative system to Scotland. Even at that time, Gentlemen, the leaning of my mind was in favour of one measure to which the illustrious leader of the Whig party, whose name ought never to be mentioned without gratitude and reverence in any assembly of British electors, I mean Earl Grey, was understood to entertain strong objections, and to which his Cabinet, as a Cabinet, was invariably opposed. I speak of the vote by ballot. All that has passed since that time confirms me in the view which I was then inclined to take of that important question. At the same time I do not think that all the advantages are on one side and all the disadvantages on the other. I must admit that the effect of the practice of secret voting would be to withdraw the voter from the operation of some salutary and honourable, as well as of some pernicious and degrading motives. But seeing, as I cannot help seeing, that the practice of intimidation, instead of diminishing, is gaining ground, I am compelled to consider whether the time has not arrived when we are bound to apply what seems the only efficient remedy. And I am compelled to consider whether, in doing so, I am not strictly following the principles of the Reform Bill to the legitimate conclusions. For surely those who supported the Reform Bill intended to give the people of Britain a reality, not a delusion; to destroy nomination, and not to make an outward show of destroying it; to bestow the franchise, and not the name of the franchise; and least of all, to give suffering and humiliation under the name of the franchise. If men are to be returned to Parliament, not by popular election, but by nomination, then I say without hesitation that the ancient system was much the best. Both systems alike sent men to Parliament who were not freely chosen by independent constituent bodies: but under the old system there was little or no need of intimidation, while, under the new system, we have the misery and disgrace produced by intimidation added to the process. If, therefore, we are to have nomination, I prefer the nomination which used to take place at Old Sarum to the nomination which now takes place at Newark. In both cases you have members returned at the will of one landed proprietor: but at Newark you have two hundred ejectments into the bargain, to say nothing of the mortification and remorse endured by all those who, though they were not ejected, yet voted against their consciences from fear of ejectment.

There is perhaps no point on which good men of all parties are more completely agreed than on the necessity of restraining and punishing corruption in the election of Members of Parliament. The evils of corruption are doubtless very great; but it appears to me that those evils which are attributed to corruption may, with equal justice, be attributed to intimidation, and that intimidation produces also some monstrous evils with which corruption cannot be reproached. In both cases alike the elector commits a breach of trust. In both cases alike he employs for his own advantage an important power which was confided to him, that it might be used, to the best of his judgment, for the general good of the community. Thus far corruption and intimidation operate in the same manner. But there is this difference betwixt the two systems; corruption operates by giving pleasure, intimidation by giving pain. To give a poor man five pounds causes no pain: on the contrary it produces pleasure. It is in itself no bad act: indeed, if the five pounds were given on another occasion, and without a corrupt object, it might pass for a benevolent act. But to tell a man that you will reduce him to a situation in which he will miss his former comforts, and in which his family will be forced to beg their bread, is a cruel act. Corruption has a sort of illegitimate relationship to benevolence, and engenders some feelings of a cordial and friendly nature. There is a notion of charity connected with the distribution of the money of the rich among the needy, even in a corrupt manner. The comic writer who tells us that the whole system of corruption is to be considered as a commerce of generosity on one side and of gratitude on the other, has rather exaggerated than misrepresented what really takes place in many of these English constituent bodies where money is lavished to conciliate the favour and obtain the suffrages of the people. But in intimidation the whole process is an odious one. The whole feeling on the part of the elector is that of shame, degradation, and hatred of the person to whom he has given his vote. The elector is indeed placed in a worse situation than if he had no vote at all; for there is not one of us who would not rather be without a vote than be compelled to give it to the person whom he dislikes above all others.

Thinking, therefore, that the practice of intimidation has all the evils which are to be found in corruption, and that it has other evils which are not to be found in corruption, I was naturally led to consider whether it was possible to prevent it by any process similar to that by which corruption is restrained. Corruption, you all know, is the subject of penal laws. If it is brought home to the parties, they are liable to severe punishment. Although it is not often that it can be brought home, yet there are instances. I remember several men of large property confined in Newgate for corruption. Penalties have been awarded against offenders to the amount of five hundred pounds. Many members of Parliament have been unseated on account of the malpractices of their agents. But you cannot, I am afraid, repress intimidation by penal laws, Such laws would infringe the most sacred rights of property. How can I require a man to deal with tradesmen who have voted against him, or to renew the leases of tenants who have voted against him? What is it that the Jew says in the play?

"I'll not answer that,
But say it is my humour."

Or, as a Christian of our own time has expressed himself, "I have a right to do what I will with my own." There is a great deal of weight in the reasoning of Shylock and the Duke of Newcastle. There would be an end of the right of property if you were to interdict a landlord from ejecting a tenant, if you were to force a gentleman to employ a particular butcher, and to take as much beef this year as last year. The principle of the right of property is that a man is not only to be allowed to dispose of his wealth rationally and usefully, but to be allowed to indulge his passions and caprices, to employ whatever tradesmen and labourers he chooses, and to let, or refuse to let, his land according to his own pleasure, without giving any reason or asking anybody's leave. I remember that, on one of the first evenings on which I sate in the House of Commons, Mr Poulett Thompson proposed a censure on the Duke of Newcastle for His Grace's conduct towards the electors of Newark.

Sir Robert Peel opposed the motion, not only with considerable ability, but with really unanswerable reasons. He asked if it was meant that a tenant who voted against his landlord was to keep his lease for ever. If so, tenants would vote against a landlord to secure themselves, as they now vote with a landlord to secure themselves. I thought, and think, this argument unanswerable ; but then it is unanswerable in favour of the ballot ; for, if it be impossible to deal with intimidation by punishment, you are bound to consider whether there be any means of prevention ; and the only mode of prevention that has ever been suggested is the ballot. That the ballot has disadvantages to be set off against its advantages, I admit ; but it appears to me that we have only a choice of evils, and that the evils for which the ballot is a specific remedy are greater than any which the ballot is likely to produce. Observe with what exquisite accuracy the ballot draws the line of distinction between the power which we ought to give to the proprietor and the power which we ought not to give him. It leaves the proprietor the absolute power to do what he will with his own. Nobody calls upon him to say why he ejected this tenant, or took away his custom from that tradesman. It leaves him at liberty to follow his own tastes, to follow his strangest whims. The only thing which it puts beyond his power is the vote of the tenant, the vote of the tradesman, which it is our duty to protect. I ought at the same time to say, that there is one objection to the ballot of a very serious nature, but which I think may, nevertheless, be obviated. It is quite clear that, if the ballot shall be adopted, there will be no remedy for an undue return by a subsequent scrutiny. Unless, therefore, the registration of votes can be counted on as correct, the ballot will undoubtedly lead to great inconvenience. It seems, therefore, that a careful revision of the whole system of registration, and an improvement of the tribunal before which the rights of the electors are to be established, should be an inseparable part of any measure by which the ballot is to be introduced.

As to those evils which we have been considering, they are evils which are practically felt ; they are evils which press hard upon a large portion of the constituent body ; and it is not therefore strange, that the cry for a remedy should be loud and urgent. But there is another subject respecting which I am told that many among you are anxious, a subject of a very different description. I allude to the duration of Parliaments.

It must be admitted that for some years past we have had little reason to complain of the length of Parliaments. Since the year 1830 we have had five general elections ; two occasioned by the deaths of two Sovereigns, and three by political conjunctures. As to the present Parliament, I do not think that, whatever opinion gentlemen may entertain of the conduct of that body, they will impute its faults to any confidence which the members have that they are to sit for seven years ; for I very much question whether there be one gentleman in the House of Commons who thinks, or has ever thought, that his seat is worth three years' purchase. When, therefore, we discuss this question, we must remember that we are discussing a question not immediately pressing. I freely admit, however, that this is no reason for not fairly considering the subject : for it is the part of wise men to provide against evils which, though not actually felt, may be reasonably apprehended. It seems to me that here, as in the case of the ballot, there are serious considerations to be urged on both sides. The objections to long Parliaments are perfectly obvious. The truth is that, in very long Parliaments, you have no representation at all. The mind of the people goes on changing; and the Parliament, remaining unchanged, ceases to reflect the opinion of the constituent bodies. In the old times before the Revolution, a Parliament might sit during the life of the monarch. Parliaments were then sometimes of eighteen or twenty years' duration. Thus the Parliament called by Charles the Second soon after his return from exile, and elected when the nation was drunk with hope and convulsed by a hysterical paroxysm of loyalty, continued to sit long after two-thirds of those who had heartily welcomed the King back from Holland as heartily wished him in Holland again. Since the Revolution we have not felt that evil to the same extent: but it must be admitted that the term of seven years is too long. There are, however, other considerations to set off against this. There are two very serious evils connected with every general election: the first is, the violent political excitement: the second is, the ruinous expense. Both these evils were very greatly diminished by the Reform Act. Formerly these were things which you in Scotland knew nothing about; but in England the injury to the peace and morals of society resulting from a general election was incalculable. During a fifteen days' poll in a town of one hundred thousand inhabitants, money was flowing in all directions; the streets were running with beer; all business was suspended; and there was nothing but disturbance and riot, and slander, and calumny, and quarrels, which left in the bosoms of private families heartburnings such as were not extinguished in the course of many years. By limiting the duration of the poll, the Reform Act has conferred as great a blessing on the country,—and that is saying a bold word,—as by any other provision which it contains. Still it is not to be denied that there are evils inseparable from that state of political excitement into which every community is thrown by the preparations for an election. A still greater evil is the expense. That evil too has been diminished by the operation of the Reform Act; but it still exists to a considerable extent. We do not now indeed hear of such elections as that of Yorkshire in 1807, or that of Northumberland in 1827. We do not hear of elections that cost two hundred thousand pounds. But that the tenth part of that sum, nay, that the hundredth part of that sum should be expended in a contest, is a great evil. Do not imagine, Gentlemen, that all this evil falls on the candidates. It is on you that the evil falls. The effect must necessarily be to limit you in your choice of able men to serve you. The number of men who can advance fifty thousand pounds is necessarily much smaller than the number of men who can advance five thousand pounds; the number of these again is much smaller than the number of those who can advance five hundred pounds; and the number of men who can advance five hundred pounds every three years is necessarily smaller than the number of those who can advance five hundred pounds every seven years. Therefore it seems to me that the question is one of comparison. In long Parliaments the representative character is in some measure effaced. On the other side, if you have short Parliaments, your choice of men will be limited. Now in all questions of this sort, it is the part of wisdom to weigh, not indeed with minute accuracy,—for questions of civil prudence cannot be subjected to an arithmetical test,—but to weigh the advantages and disadvantages carefully, and then to strike the balance. Gentlemen will probably judge according to their habits of mind, and according to their opportunities of observation. Those who have seen much of the evils of elections will probably incline to long

Parliaments; those who have seen little or nothing of these evils will probably incline to a short term. Only observe this, that, whatever may be the legal term, it ought to be a year longer than that for which Parliaments ought ordinarily to sit. For there must be a general election at the end of the legal term, let the state of the country be what it may. There may be riot; there may be revolution; there may be famine in the country; and yet if the Minister wait to the end of the legal term, the writs must go out. A wise Minister will therefore always dissolve the Parliament a year before the end of the legal term, if the country be then in a quiet state. It has now been long the practice not to keep a Parliament more than six years. Thus the Parliament which was elected in 1784 sat till 1790, six years; the Parliament of 1790 till 1796, the Parliament of 1796 to 1802, the Parliament of 1812 to 1818, and the Parliament of 1820 till 1826. If, therefore, you wish the duration of Parliaments to be shortened to three years, the proper course would be to fix the legal term at four years; and if you wish them to sit for four years, the proper course would be to fix the legal term at five years. My own inclination would be to fix the legal term at five years, and thus to have a Parliament practically every four years. I ought to add that, whenever any shortening of Parliament takes place, we ought to alter that rule which requires that Parliament shall be dissolved as often as the demise of the Crown takes place. It is a rule for which no statesmanlike reason can be given; it is a mere technical rule; and it has already been so much relaxed that, even considered as a technical rule, it is absurd.

I come now to another subject, of the highest and gravest importance: I mean the elective franchise; and I acknowledge that I am doubtful whether my opinions on this subject may be so pleasing to many here present as, if I may judge from your expressions, my sentiments on other subjects have been. I shall express my opinions, however, on this subject as frankly as I have expressed them when they may have been more pleasing. I shall express them with the frankness of a man who is more desirous to gain your esteem than to gain your votes. I am for the original principle of the Reform Bill. I think that principle excellent; and I am sorry that we ever deviated from it. There were two deviations to which I was strongly opposed, and to which the authors of the bill, hard pressed by their opponents and feebly supported by their friends, very unwillingly consented. One was the admission of the freemen to vote in towns: the other was the admission of the fifty pound tenants at will to vote in counties. At the same time I must say that I despair of being able to apply a direct remedy to either of these evils. The ballot might perhaps be an indirect remedy for the latter. I think that the system of registration should be amended, that the clauses relating to the payment of rates should be altered, or altogether removed, and that the elective franchise should be extended to every ten pound householder, whether he resides within or without the limits of a town. To this extent I am prepared to go; but I should not be dealing with the ingenuousness which you have a right to expect, if I did not tell you that I am not prepared to go further. There are many other questions as to which you are entitled to know the opinions of your representative: but I shall only glance rapidly at the most important. I have ever been a most determined enemy to the slave trade, and to personal slavery under every form. I have always been a friend to popular education. I have always been a friend to the right of free discussion. I have always been adverse to all restrictions on trade, and especially to those restrictions which affect the price of the necessaries of life. I have always been adverse to religious persecution, whether it takes the form of direct penal laws, or of civil disabilities.

Now, having said so much upon measures, I hope you will permit me to say something about men. If you send me as your representative to Parliament, I wish you to understand that I shall go there determined to support the present ministry. I shall do so not from any personal interest or feeling. I have certainly the happiness to have several kind and much valued friends among the members of the Government; and there is one member of the Government, the noble President of the Council, to whom I owe obligations which I shall always be proud to avow. That noble Lord, when I was utterly unknown in public life, and scarcely known even to himself, placed me in the House of Commons; and it is due to him to say that he never in the least interfered with the freedom of my parliamentary conduct. I have since represented a great constituent body, for whose confidence and kindness I can never be sufficiently grateful, I mean the populous borough of Leeds. I may possibly by your kindness be placed in the proud situation of Representative of Edinburgh; but I never could and never can be a more independent Member of the House of Commons than when I sat there as the nominee of Lord Lansdowne. But, while I acknowledge my obligations to that noble person, while I avow the friendship which I feel for many of his colleagues, it is not on such grounds that I vindicate the support which it is my intention to give them. I have no right to sacrifice your interests to my personal or private feelings: my principles do not permit me to do so; nor do my friends expect that I should do so. The support which I propose to give to the present Ministry I shall give on the following grounds. I believe the present Ministry to be by many degrees the best Ministry which, in the present state of the country, can be formed. I believe that we have only one choice. I believe that our choice is between a Ministry substantially,—for of course I do not speak of particular individuals,—between a Ministry substantially the same that we have, and a Ministry under the direction of the Duke of Wellington and Sir Robert Peel. I do not hesitate to pronounce that my choice is in favour of the former. Some gentleman appears to dissent from what I say. If I knew what his objections are, I would try to remove them. But it is impossible to answer inarticulate noises. Is the objection that the government is too conservative? Or is the objection that the government is too radical? If I understand rightly, the objection is that the Government does not proceed vigorously enough in the work of Reform. To that objection then I will address myself. Now, I am far from denying that the Ministers have committed faults. But, at the same time, I make allowances for the difficulties with which they are contending; and having made these allowances, I confidently say that, when I look back at the past, I think them entitled to praise, and that, looking forward to the future, I can pronounce with still more confidence that they are entitled to support.

It is a common error, and one which I have found among men, not only intelligent, but much conversant in public business, to think that in politics, legislation is everything and administration nothing. Nothing is more usual than to hear people say, "What! another session gone and nothing done; no new bills passed; the Irish Municipal Bill stopped in the House of Lords. How could we be worse off if the Tories were in?" My answer is that, if the Tories were in, our legislation would be in as bad a state as at present. and we should have a bad administration into the bargain. It seems strange to me that gentlemen should not be aware that it may be better to have unreformed laws administered in a reforming spirit, than reformed laws administered in a spirit hostile to all reform. We often hear the maxim, "Measures not men," and there is a sense in which it is an excellent maxim. Measures not men, certainly: that is, we are not to oppose Sir Robert Peel simply because he is Sir Robert Peel, or to support Lord John Russell simply because he is Lord John Russell. We are not to follow our political leaders in the way in which my honest Highland ancestors followed their chieftains. We are not to imitate that blind devotion which led all the Campbells to take the side of George the Second because the Duke of Argyle was a Whig, and all the Camerons to take the side of the Stuarts because Lochiel was a Jacobite. But if you mean that, while the laws remain the same, it is unimportant by whom they are administered, then I say that a doctrine more absurd was never uttered. Why, what are laws? They are mere words; they are a dead letter; till a living agent comes to put life into them. This is the case even in judicial matters. You can tie up the judges of the land much more closely than it would be right to tie up the Secretary for the Home Department or the Secretary for Foreign Affairs. Yet is it immaterial whether the laws be administered by Chief Justice Hale or Chief Justice Jeffreys? And can you doubt that the case is still stronger when you come to political questions? It would be perfectly easy, as many of you must be aware, to point out instances in which society has prospered under defective laws, well administered, and other instances in which society has been miserable under institutions that looked well on paper. But we need not go beyond our own country and our own times. Let us see what, within this island and in the present year, a good administration has done to mitigate bad laws. For example, let us take the law of libel. I hold the present state of our law of libel to be a scandal to a civilised community. Nothing more absurd can be found in the whole history of jurisprudence. How the law of libel was abused formerly, you all know. You all know how it was abused under the administrations of Lord North, of Mr Pitt, of Mr Perceval, of the Earl of Liverpool; and I am sorry to say that it was abused, most unjustifiably abused, by Lord Abinger under the administration of the Duke of Wellington and Sir Robert Peel. Now is there any person who will pretend to say that it has ever been abused by the Government of Lord Melbourne? That Government has enemies in abundance; it has been attacked by Tory malcontents and by Radical malcontents; but has any one of them ever had the effrontery to say that it has abused the power of filing *ex officio* informations for libel? Has this been from want of provocation? On the contrary, the present Government has been libelled in a way in which no Government was ever libelled before. Has the law been altered? Has it been modified? Not at all. We have exactly the same laws that we had when Mr Perry was brought to trial for saying that George the Third was unpopular, Mr Leigh Hunt for saying that George the Fourth was fat, and Sir Francis Burdett for expressing, not perhaps in the best taste, a natural and honest indignation at the slaughter which took place at Manchester in 1819. The law is precisely the same; but if it had been entirely remodelled, political writers could not have had more liberty than they have enjoyed since Lord Melbourne came into power.

I have given you an instance of the power of a good administration to mitigate a bad law. Now, see how necessary it is that there should be a good administration to carry a good law into effect. An excellent bill was brought into the House of Commons by Lord John Russell in 1828, and passed. To any other man than Lord John Russell the carrying of such a bill would have been an enviable distinction indeed; but his name is identified with still greater reforms. It will, however, always be accounted one of his titles to public gratitude that he was the author of the law which repealed the Test Act. Well, a short time since, a noble peer, the Lord Lieutenant of the county of Nottingham, thought fit to re-enact the Test Act, so far as that county was concerned. I have already mentioned His Grace the Duke of Newcastle, and, to say truth, there is no life richer in illustrations of all forms and branches of misgovernment than his. His Grace very coolly informed Her Majesty's Ministers that he had not recommended a certain gentleman for the commission of the peace because the gentleman was a Dissenter. Now here is a law which admits Dissenters to offices; and a Tory nobleman takes it on himself to rescind that law. But happily we have Whig Ministers. What did they do? Why, they put the Dissenter into the Commission; and they turned the Tory nobleman out of the Lieutenancy. Do you seriously imagine that under a Tory administration this would have been done? I have no wish to say anything disrespectful of the great Tory leaders. I shall always speak with respect of the great qualities and public services of the Duke of Wellington: I have no other feeling about him than one of pride that my country has produced so great a man; nor do I feel anything but respect and kindness for Sir Robert Peel, of whose abilities no person that has had to encounter him in debate will ever speak slightingly. I do not imagine that those eminent men would have approved of the conduct of the Duke of Newcastle. I believe that the Duke of Wellington would as soon have thought of running away from the field of battle as of doing the same thing in Hampshire, where he is Lord Lieutenant. But do you believe that he would have turned the Duke of Newcastle out? I believe that he would not. As Mr Pulteney, a great political leader, said a hundred years since, "The heads of parties are, like the heads of snakes, carried on by the tails." It would have been utterly impossible for the Tory Ministers to have discarded the powerful Tory Duke, unless they had at the same time resolved, like Mr Canning in 1827, to throw themselves for support on the Whigs.

Now I have given you these two instances to show that a change in the administration may produce all the effects of a change in the law. You see that to have a Tory Government is virtually to re-enact the Test Act, and that to have a Whig Government is virtually to repeal the law of libel. And if this is the case in England and Scotland, where society is in a sound state, how much more must it be the case in the diseased part of the empire, in Ireland? Ask any man there, whatever may be his religion, whatever may be his politics, Churchman, Presbyterian, Roman Catholic, Repealer, Precursor, Orangeman, ask Mr O'Connell, ask Colonel Conolly, whether it is a slight matter in whose hands the executive power is lodged. Every Irishman will tell you that it is a matter of life and death; that in fact more depends upon the men than upon the laws. It disgusts me therefore to hear men of liberal politics say, "What is the use of a Whig Government? The Ministers can do nothing for the country. They have been four years at work on an Irish Municipal Bill, without being able to pass it through the Lords." Would any ten Acts of Parliament make such a difference to Ireland as the difference between having Lord Ebrington for Lord Lieutenant, with Lord Morpeth for

Secretary, and having the Earl of Roden for Lord Lieutenant, with Mr Lefroy for Secretary? Ask the popular Irish leaders whether they would like better to remain as they are, with Lord Ebrington as Lord Lieutenant, or to have the Municipal Bill, and any other three bills which they might name, with Lord Roden for Viceroy; and they will at once answer, "Leave us Lord Ebrington; and burn your bills." The truth is that, the more defective the legislation, the more important is a good administration, just as the personal qualities of the Sovereign are of more importance in despotic countries like Russia than in a limited monarchy. If we have not in our Statute Book all the securities necessary for good government, it is of the more importance that the character of the men who administer the government should be an additional security.

But we are told that the Government is weak. That is most true; and I believe that almost all that we are tempted to blame in the conduct of the Government is to be attributed to weakness. But let us consider what the nature of this weakness is. Is it that kind of weakness which makes it our duty to oppose the Government? Or is it that kind of weakness which makes it our duty to support the Government? Is it intellectual weakness, moral weakness, the incapacity to discern, or the want of courage to pursue, the true interest of the nation? Such was the weakness of Mr Addington, when this country was threatened with invasion from Boulogne. Such was the weakness of the Government which sent out the wretched Walcheren expedition, and starved the Duke of Wellington in Spain; a government whose only strength was shown in prosecuting writers who exposed abuses, and in slaughtering rioters whom oppression had driven into outrage. Is that the weakness of the present Government? I think not. As compared with any other party capable of holding the reins of Government, they are deficient neither in intellectual nor in moral strength. On all great questions of difference between the Ministers and the Opposition, I hold the Ministers to be in the right. When I consider the difficulties with which they have to struggle, when I see how manfully that struggle is maintained by Lord Melbourne, when I see that Lord John Russell has excited even the admiration of his opponents by the heroic manner in which he has gone on, year after year, in sickness and domestic sorrow, fighting the battle of Reform, I am led to the conclusion that the weakness of the Ministers is of that sort which makes it our duty to give them, not opposition, but support; and that support it is my purpose to afford to the best of my ability.

If, indeed, I thought myself at liberty to consult my own inclination, I should have stood aloof from the conflict. If you should be pleased to send me to Parliament, I shall enter an assembly very different from that which I quitted in 1834. I left the Whigs united and dominant, strong in the confidence and attachment of one House of Parliament, strong also in the fears of the other. I shall return to find them helpless in the Lords, and forced almost every week to fight a battle for existence in the Commons. Many, whom I left bound together by what seemed indissoluble private and public ties, I shall now find assailing each other with more than the ordinary bitterness of political hostility. Many with whom I sate side by side, contending through whole nights for the Reform Bill, till the sun broke over the Thames on our undiminished ranks, I shall now find on hostile benches. I shall be compelled to engage in painful altercations with many with whom I had hoped never to have a conflict, except in the generous and friendly strife which should best serve the common cause. I left the Liberal Government strong enough to maintain itself against an adverse Court; I see that the Liberal Government now rests for support on the preference of a Sovereign, in whom the country sees with delight the promise of a better, a gentler, a happier Elizabeth, of a Sovereign in whom we hope that our children and our grandchildren will admire the firmness, the sagacity, and the spirit which distinguished the last and greatest of the Tudors, tempered by the beneficent influence of more humane times and more popular institutions. Whether royal favour, never more needed and never better deserved, will enable the government to surmount the difficulties with which it has to deal, I cannot presume to judge. It may be that the blow has only been deferred for a season, and that a long period of Tory domination is before us. Be it so. I entered public life a Whig; and a Whig I am determined to remain. I use that word, and I wish you to understand that I use it, in no narrow sense. I mean by a Whig, not one who subscribes implicitly to the contents of any book, though that book may have been written by Locke; not one who approves the whole conduct of any statesman, though that statesman may have been Fox; not one who adopts the opinions in fashion in any circle, though that circle may be composed of the finest and noblest spirits of the age. But it seems to me that, when I look back on our history, I can discern a great party which has, through many generations, preserved its identity; a party often depressed, never extinguished; a party which, though often tainted with the faults of the age, has always been in advance of the age; a party which, though guilty of many errors and some crimes, has the glory of having established our civil and religious liberties on a firm foundation; and of that party I am proud to be a member. It was that party which, on the great question of monopolies, stood up against Elizabeth. It was that party which, in the reign of James the First, organised the earliest parliamentary opposition, which steadily asserted the privileges of the people, and wrested prerogative after prerogative from the Crown. It was that party which forced Charles the First to relinquish the ship-money. It was that party which destroyed the Star Chamber and the High Commission Court. It was that party which, under Charles the Second, carried the Habeas Corpus Act, which effected the Revolution, which passed the Toleration Act, which broke the yoke of a foreign church in your country, and which saved Scotland from the fate of unhappy Ireland. It was that party which reared and maintained the constitutional throne of Hanover against the hostility of the Church and of the landed aristocracy of England. It was that party which opposed the war with America and the war with the French Republic; which imparted the blessings of our free Constitution to the Dissenters; and which, at a later period, by unparalleled sacrifices and exertions, extended the same blessings to the Roman Catholics. To the Whigs of the seventeenth century we owe it that we have a House of Commons. To the Whigs of the nineteenth century we owe it that the House of Commons has been purified. The abolition of the slave trade, the abolition of colonial slavery, the extension of popular education, the mitigation of the rigour of the penal code, all, all were effected by that party; and of that party, I repeat, I am a member. I look with pride on all that the Whigs have done for the cause of human freedom and of human happiness. I see them now hard pressed, struggling with difficulties, but still fighting the good fight. At their head I see men who have inherited the spirit and the virtues, as well as the blood, of old champions and martyrs of freedom. To those men I propose to attach myself. Delusion may triumph : but the triumphs of delusion are but for a day. We may be defeated : but our principles will only gather fresh strength from defeats. Be that, however, as it may, my part is taken. While one shred of the old banner is flying, by that banner will I at least be found. The good old cause, as Sidney called it on the scaffold, vanquished or victorious, insulted or triumphant, the good old cause is still the good old cause with me. Whether in or out of Parliament, whether speaking with that authority which must always belong to the representative of this great and enlightened community, or expressing the humble sentiments of a private citizen, I will to the last maintain inviolate my fidelity to principles which, though they may be borne down for a time by senseless clamour, are yet strong with the strength and immortal with the immortality of truth, and which, however they may be misunderstood or misrepresented by contemporaries, will assuredly find justice from a better age. Gentlemen, I have done. I have only to thank you for the kind attention with which you have heard me, and to express my hope that whether my principles have met with your concurrence or not, the frankness with which I have expressed them will at least obtain your approbation.

A SPEECH

DELIVERED IN THE HOUSE OF COMMONS ON THE 29TH OF JANUARY 1840.

On the twenty-eighth of January 1840, Sir John Yarde Buller moved the following resolution:

"That Her Majesty's Government, as at present constituted, does not possess the confidence of the House."

After a discussion of four nights the motion was rejected by 308 votes to 287. The following Speech was made on the second night of the debate.

THE House, Sir, may possibly imagine that I rise under some little feeling of irritation to reply to the personal reflections which have been introduced into the discussion. It would be easy to reply to these reflections: it would be still easier to retort them: but I should think either course unworthy of me and of this great occasion. If ever I should so far forget myself as to wander from the subject of debate to matters concerning only myself, it will not, I hope, be at a time when the dearest interests of our country are staked on the result of our deliberations. I rise under feelings of anxiety which leave no room in my mind for selfish vanity or petty vindictiveness. I believe with the most intense conviction that, in pleading for the Government to which I belong, I am pleading for the safety of the Commonwealth, for the reformation of abuses, and at the same time for the preservation of august and venerable institutions: and I trust, Mr Speaker, that when the question is whether a Cabinet be or be not worthy of the confidence of Parliament, the first Member of that Cabinet who comes forward to defend himself and his colleagues will find here some portion of that generosity and good feeling which once distinguished English gentlemen. But be this as it may, my voice shall be heard. I repeat, that I am pleading at once for the reformation and for the preservation of our institutions, for liberty and order, for justice administered in mercy, for equal laws, for the rights of conscience, and for the real union of Great Britain and Ireland. If, on so grave an occasion, I should advert to one or two of the charges which have been brought against myself personally, I shall do so only because I conceive that those charges affect in some degree the character of the Government to which I belong.

One of the chief accusations brought against the Government by the honourable Baronet* who opened the debate, and repeated by the seconder,† and by almost every gentleman who has addressed the House from the benches opposite, is that I have been invited to take office though my opinion with respect to the Ballot is known to be different from that of my colleagues. We have been repeatedly told that a Ministry in which there is not perfect unanimity on a subject so important must be undeserving of the public confidence. Now, Sir, it is true that I am in favour of secret voting, that my noble and right honourable friends near me are in favour of open voting, and yet that we sit in the same Cabinet.

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* Sir John Yarde Buller.

† Alderman Thompson.

But if, on account of this difference of opinion, the Government is unworthy of public confidence, then I am sure that scarcely any government which has existed within the memory of the oldest man has been deserving of public confidence. It is well known that in the Cabinets of Mr Pitt, of Mr Fox, of Lord Liverpool, of Mr Canning, of the Duke of Wellington, there were open questions of great moment. Mr Pitt, while still zealous for parliamentary reform, brought into the Cabinet Lord Grenville, who was adverse to parliamentary reform. Again, Mr Pitt, while eloquently supporting the abolition of the Slave Trade, brought into the Cabinet Mr Dundas, who was the chief defender of the Slave Trade. Mr Fox, too, intense as was his abhorrence of the Slave Trade, sat in the same Cabinet with Lord Sidmouth and Mr Windham, who voted to the last against the abolition of that trade. Lord Liverpool, Mr Canning, the Duke of Wellington, all left the question of Catholic Emancipation open. And yet, of all questions, that was perhaps the very last that should have been left open. For it was not merely a legislative question, but a question which affected every part of the executive administration. But, to come to the present time, suppose that you could carry your resolution, suppose that you could drive the present Ministers from power, who that may succeed them will be able to form a government in which there will be no open questions? Can the right honourable Baronet the member for Tamworth* form a Cabinet without leaving the great question of our privileges open? In what respect is that question less important than the question of the Ballot? Is it not indeed from the privileges of the House that all questions relating to the constitution of the House derive their importance? What does it matter how we are chosen, if, when we meet, we do not possess the powers necessary to enable us to perform the functions of a legislative assembly? Yet you who would turn out the present Ministers because they differ from each other as to the way in which Members of this House should be chosen, wish to bring in men who decidedly differ from each other as to the relation in which this House stands to the nation, to the other House, and to the Courts of Judicature. Will you say that the dispute between the House and the Court of Queen's Bench is a trifling dispute? Surely, in the late debates, you were all perfectly agreed as to the importance of the question, though you were agreed as to nothing else. Some of you told us that we were contending for a power essential to our honour and usefulness. Many of you protested against our proceedings, and declared that we were encroaching on the province of the tribunals, violating the liberty of our fellow citizens, punishing honest magistrates for not perjuring themselves. Are these trifles? And can we believe that you really feel a horror of open questions when we see your Prime Minister elect sending people to prison overnight, and his law officers elect respectfully attending the levee of those prisoners the next morning? Observe, too, that this question of privileges is not merely important; it is also pressing. Something must be done, and that speedily. My belief is that more inconvenience would follow from leaving that question open one month than from leaving the question of the Ballot open ten years.

The Ballot, Sir, is not the only subject on which I am accused of holding dangerous opinions. The right honourable Baronet the Member for Pembroke† pronounces the present Government a Chartist Government; and he proves his point by saying that I am a member of the government, and that I wish to give the elective franchise to every ten pound householder, whether his house be in a town or in the country. Is it possible, Sir, that the honourable Baronet should not know that the fundamental principle of the plan of government called the People's Charter is that every male of twenty-one should have a vote? Or is it possible that he can see no difference between giving the franchise to all ten pound householders, and giving the franchise to all males of twenty-one? Does he think the ten pound householders a class morally or intellectually unfit to possess the franchise, he who bore a chief part in framing the law which gave them the franchise in all the represented towns of the United Kingdom? Or will he say that the ten pound householder in a town is morally and intellectually fit to be an elector, but that the ten pound householder who lives in the open country is morally and intellectually unfit? Is not house-rent notoriously higher in towns than in the country? Is it not, therefore, probable that the occupant of a ten pound house in a rural hamlet will be a man who has a greater stake in the peace and welfare of society than a man who has a ten pound house in Manchester or Birmingham? Can you defend on conservative principles an arrangement which gives votes to a poorer class and withholds them from a richer? For my own part, I believe it to be essential to the welfare of the state, that the elector should have a pecuniary qualification. I believe that the ten pound qualification cannot be proved to be either too high or too low. Changes, which may hereafter take place in the value of money and in the condition of the people, may make a change of the qualification necessary. But the ten pound qualification is, I believe, well suited to the present state of things. At any rate, I am unable to conceive why it should be a sufficient qualification within the limits of a borough, and an insufficient qualification a yard beyond those limits; sufficient at Knightsbridge, but insufficient at Kensington; sufficient at Lambeth, but insufficient at Battersea? If any person calls this Chartism, he must permit me to tell him that he does not know what Chartism is.

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* Sir Robert Peel.

† Sir James Graham.

A motion, Sir, such as that which we are considering, brings under our review the whole policy of the kingdom, domestic, foreign, and colonial. It is not strange, therefore, that there should have been several episodes in this debate. Something has been said about the hostilities on the River Plata, something about the hostilities on the coast of China, something about Commissioner Lin, something about Captain Elliot. But on such points I shall not dwell, for it is evidently not by the opinion which the House may entertain on such points that the event of the debate will be decided. The main argument of the gentlemen who support the motion, the argument on which the right honourable Baronet who opened the debate chiefly relied, the argument which his seconder repeated, and which has formed the substance of every speech since delivered from the opposite side of the House, may be fairly summed up thus, "The country is not in a satisfactory state. There is much recklessness, much turbulence, much craving for political change; and the cause of these evils is the policy of the Whigs. They rose to power by agitation in 1830: they retained power by means of agitation through the tempestuous months which followed: they carried the Reform Bill by means of agitation: expelled from office, they forced themselves in again by means of agitation; and now we are paying the penalty of their misconduct. Chartism is the natural offspring of Whiggism. From those who caused the evil we cannot expect the remedy. The first thing to be done is to dismiss them, and to call to power men who, not having instigated the people to commit excesses, can, without incurring the charge of inconsistency, enforce the laws."

Now, Sir, it seems to me that this argument was completely refuted by the able and eloquent speech of my right honourable friend the Judge Advocate.* He said, and he said most truly, that those who hold this language are really accusing, not the Government of Lord Melbourne, but the Government of Lord Grey. I was therefore, I must say, surprised, after the speech of my right honourable friend, to hear the right honourable Baronet the Member for Pembroke, himself a distinguished member of the cabinet of Lord Grey, pronounce a harangue against agitation. That he was himself an agitator he does not venture to deny; but he tries to excuse himself by saying, "I liked the Reform Bill; I thought it a good bill; and so I agitated for it; and, in agitating for it, I acknowledge that I went to the very utmost limit of what was prudent, to the very utmost limit of what was legal." Does not the right honourable Baronet perceive that, by setting up this defence for his own past conduct, he admits that agitation is good or evil, according as the objects of the agitation are good or evil? When I hear him speak of agitation as a practice disgraceful to a public man, and especially to a Minister of the Crown, and address his lecture in a particular manner to me, I cannot but wonder that he should not perceive that his reproaches, instead of wounding me, recoil on himself. I was not a member of the Cabinet which brought in the Reform Bill, which dissolved the Parliament in a moment of intense excitement in order to carry the Reform Bill, which refused to serve the Sovereign longer unless he would create peers in sufficient numbers to carry the Reform Bill. I was at that time only one of those hundreds of members of this House, one of those millions of Englishmen, who were deeply impressed with the conviction that the Reform Bill was one of the best laws that ever had been framed, and who reposed entire confidence in the abilities, the integrity, and the patriotism of the ministers; and I must add that in no member of the administration did I place more confidence than in the right honourable Baronet, who was then First Lord of the Admiralty, and in the noble lord who was then Secretary for Ireland.† It was indeed impossible for me not to see that the public mind was strongly, was dangerously stirred: but I trusted that men so able, men so upright, men who had so large a stake in the country, would carry us safe through the storm which they had raised. And is it not rather hard that my confidence in the right honourable Baronet and the noble lord is to be imputed to me as a crime by the very men who are trying to raise the right honourable Baronet and the noble lord to power? The Charter, we have been told in this debate, is the child of the Reform Bill. But whose child is the Reform Bill? If men are to be deemed unfit for office because they roused the national spirit to support that bill, because they went as far as the law permitted in order to carry that bill, then I say that no men can be more unfit for office than the right honourable Baronet and the noble lord. It may be thought presumptuous in me to defend two persons who are so well able to defend themselves, and the more so, as they have a powerful ally in the right honourable Baronet the Member for Tamworth, who, having twice offered them high places in the Government, must be supposed to be of opinion that they are not disqualified for being ministers by having been agitators. I will, however, venture to offer some arguments in vindication of the conduct of my noble and right honourable friends, as I once called them, and as, notwithstanding the asperity which has characterised the present debate, I should still have pleasure in calling them. I would say in their behalf that agitation ought not to be indiscriminately condemned ; that great abuses ought to be removed ; that in this country scarcely any great abuse was ever removed till the public feeling had been roused against it ; and that the public feeling has seldom been roused against abuses without exertions to which the name of agitation may be given. I altogether deny the assertion which we have repeatedly heard in the course of this debate, that a government which does not discountenance agitation cannot be trusted to suppress rebellion. Agitation and rebellion, you say, are in kind the same thing : they differ only in degree. Sir, they are the same thing in the sense in which to breathe a vein and to cut a throat are the same thing. There are many points of resemblance between the act of the surgeon and the act of the assassin. In both there is the steel, the incision, the smart, the bloodshed. But the acts differ as widely as possible both in moral character and in physical effect. So with agitation and rebellion. I do not believe that there has been any moment since the revolution of 1688 at which an insurrection in this country would have been justifiable. On the other hand, I hold that we have owed to agitation a long series of beneficent reforms which could have been effected in no other way. Nor do I understand how any person can reprobate agitation, merely as agitation, unless he is prepared to adopt the maxim of Bishop Horsley, that the people have nothing to do with the laws but to obey them. The truth is that agitation is inseparable from popular government. If you wish to get rid of agitation, you must establish an oligarchy like that of Venice, or a despotism like that of Russia. If a Russian thinks that he is able to suggest an improvement in the commercial code or the criminal code of his country, he tries to obtain an audience of the Emperor Nicholas or of Count Nesselrode. If he can satisfy them that his plans are good, then undoubtedly, without agitation, without controversy in newspapers, without harangues from hustings, without clamorous meetings in great halls and in marketplaces, without petitions signed by tens of thousands, you may have a reform effected with one stroke of the pen. Not so here. Here the people, as electors, have power to decide questions of the highest importance. And ought they not to hear and read before they decide? And how can they hear if nobody speaks, or read if nobody writes? You must admit, then, that it is our right, and that it may be our duty, to attempt by speaking and writing to induce the great body of our countrymen to pronounce what we think a right decision ; and what else is agitation? In saying this I am not defending one party alone. Has there been no Tory agitation? No agitation against Popery? No agitation against the new Poor Law? No agitation against the plan of education framed by the present Government? Or, to pass from questions about which we differ to questions about which we all agree : Would the slave trade ever have been abolished without agitation? Would slavery ever have been abolished without agitation? Would your prison discipline ever have been improved without agitation? Would your penal code, once the scandal of the Statute Book, have been mitigated without agitation? I am far from denying that agitation may be abused, may be employed for bad ends, may be carried to unjustifiable lengths. So may that freedom of speech which is one of the most precious privileges of this House. Indeed, the analogy is very close. What is agitation but the mode in which the public, the body which we represent, the great outer assembly, if I may so speak, holds its debates? It is as necessary to the good government of the country that our constituents should debate as that we should debate. They sometimes go wrong, as we sometimes go wrong. There is often much exaggeration, much unfairness, much acrimony in their debates. Is there none in ours? Some worthless demagogues may have exhorted the people to resist the laws. But what member of Lord Grey's Government, what member of the present Government, ever gave any countenance to any illegal proceedings? It is perfectly true that some words which have been uttered here and in other places, and which, when taken together with the context and candidly construed, will appear to mean nothing but what was reasonable and constitutional and moderate, have been distorted and mutilated into something that has a seditious aspect. But who is secure against such misrepresentation? Not, I am sure, the right honourable Baronet the Member for Pembroke. He ought to remember that his own speeches have been used by bad men for bad ends. He ought to remember that some expressions which he used in 1830, on the subject of the emoluments divided among Privy Councillors, have been quoted by the Chartists in vindication of their excesses. Do I blame him for this? Not at all. He said nothing that was not justifiable. But it is impossible for a man so to guard his lips that his language shall not sometimes be misunderstood by dull men, and sometimes misrepresented by dishonest men. I do not, I say, blame him for having used those expressions: but I do say that, knowing how his own expressions had been perverted, he should have hesitated before he threw upon men, not less attached than himself to the cause of law, of order and property, imputations certainly not better founded than those to which he is himself liable.

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* Sir George Grey.

† Lord Stanley.

And now, Sir, to pass by many topics to which, but for the lateness of the hour, I would willingly advert, let me remind the House that the question before us is not a positive question, but a question of comparison. No man, though he may disapprove of some part of the conduct of the present Ministers, is justified in voting for the motion which we are considering, unless he believes that a change would, on the whole, be beneficial. No government is perfect: but some government there must be; and if the present government were worse than its enemies think it, it ought to exist until it can be succeeded by a better. Now I take it to be perfectly clear that, in the event of the removal of Her Majesty's present advisers, an administration must be formed of which the right honourable Baronet the Member for Tamworth will be the head. Towards that right honourable Baronet, and towards many of the noblemen and gentlemen who would probably in that event be associated with him, I entertain none but kind and respectful feelings. I am far, I hope, from that narrowness of mind which makes a man unable to see merit in any party but his own. If I may venture to parody the old Venetian proverb, I would be "First an Englishman; and then a Whig." I feel proud of my country when I think how much ability, uprightness, and patriotism may be found on both sides of the House. Among our opponents stands forth, eminently distinguished by parts, eloquence, knowledge, and, I willingly admit, by public spirit, the right honourable Baronet the Member for Tamworth. Having said this, I shall offer no apology for the remarks which, in the discharge of my public duty, I shall make, without, I hope, any personal discourtesy, on his past conduct, and his present position.

It has been, Sir, I will not say his fault, but his misfortune, his fate, to be the leader of a party with which he has no sympathy. To go back to what is now matter of history, the right honourable Baronet bore a chief part in the restoration of the currency. By a very large proportion of his followers the restoration of the currency is considered as the chief cause of the distresses of the country. The right honourable Baronet cordially supported the commercial policy of Mr Huskisson. But there was no name more odious than that of Mr Huskisson to the rank and file of the Tory party. The right honourable Baronet assented to the Act which removed the disabilities of the Protestant Dissenters. But, a very short time ago, a noble Duke, one of the highest in power and rank of the right honourable Baronet's adherents, positively refused to lend his aid to the executing of that Act. The right honourable Baronet brought in the bill which removed the disabilities of the Roman Catholics: but his supporters make it a chief article of charge against us that we have given practical effect to the law which is his best title to public esteem. The right honourable Baronet has declared himself decidedly favourable to the new Poor Law. Yet, if a voice is raised against the Whig Bastilles and the Kings of Somerset House, it is almost certain to be the voice of some zealous retainer of the right honourable Baronet. On the great question of privilege, the right honourable Baronet has taken a part which entitles him to the gratitude of all who are solicitous for the honour and the usefulness of the popular branch of the legislature. But if any person calls us tyrants, and calls those whom we have imprisoned martyrs, that person is certain to be a partisan of the right honourable Baronet. Even when the right honourable Baronet does happen to agree with his followers as to a conclusion, he seldom arrives at that conclusion by the same process of reasoning which satisfies them. Many great questions which they consider as questions of right and wrong, as questions of moral and religious principle, as questions which must, for no earthly object, and on no emergency, be compromised, are treated by him merely as questions of expediency, of place, and of time. He has opposed many bills introduced by the present Government; but he has opposed them on such grounds that he is at perfect liberty to bring in the same bills himself next year, with perhaps some slight variation. I listened to him as I always listen to him, with pleasure, when he spoke last session on the subject of education. I could not but be amused by the skill with which he performed the hard task of translating the gibberish of bigots into language which might not misbecome the mouth of a man of sense. I felt certain that he despised the prejudices of which he condescended to make use, and that his opinion about the Normal Schools and the Douai Version entirely agreed with my own. I therefore do not think that, in times like these, the right honourable Baronet can conduct the administration with honour to himself or with satisfaction to those who are impatient to see him in office. I will not affect to feel apprehensions from which I am entirely free. I do not fear, and I will not pretend to fear, that the right honourable Baronet will be a tyrant and a persecutor. I do not believe that he will give up Ireland to the tender mercies of those zealots who form, I am afraid, the strongest, and I am sure the loudest, part of his retinue. I do not believe that he will strike the names of Roman Catholics from the Privy Council book, and from the Commissions of the Peace. I do not believe that he will lay on our table a bill for the repeal of that great Act which was introduced by himself in 1829. What I do anticipate is this, that he will attempt to keep his party together by means which will excite grave discontents, and yet that he will not succeed in keeping his party together; that he will lose the support of the Tories without obtaining the support of the nation; and that his government will fall from causes purely internal.

This, Sir, is not mere conjecture. The drama is not a new one. It was performed a few years ago on the same stage and by most of the same actors. In 1827 the right honourable Baronet was, as now, the head of a powerful Tory opposition. He had, as now, the support of a strong minority in this House. He had, as now, a majority in the other House. He was, as now, the favourite of the Church and of the Universities. All who dreaded political change, all who hated religious liberty, rallied round him then, as they rally round him now. Their cry was then, as now, that a government unfriendly to the civil and ecclesiastical constitution of the realm was kept in power by intrigue and court favour, and that the right honourable Baronet was the man to whom the nation must look to defend its laws against revolutionists, and its religion against idolaters. At length that cry became irresistible. Tory animosity had pursued the most accomplished of Tory statesmen and orators to a resting place in Westminster Abbey. The arrangement which was made after his death lasted but a very few months: a Tory government was formed; and the right honourable Baronet became the leading minister of the Crown in the House of Commons. His adherents hailed his elevation with clamorous delight, and confidently expected many years of triumph and dominion. Is it necessary to say in what disappointment, in what sorrow, in what fury, those expectations ended? The right honourable Baronet had been raised to power by prejudices and passions in which he had no share. His followers were bigots. He was a statesman. He was coolly weighing conveniences against inconveniences, while they were ready to resort to a proscription and to hazard a civil war rather than depart from what they called their principles. For a time he tried to take a middle course. He imagined that it might be possible for him to stand well with his old friends, and yet to perform some part of his duty to the state. But those were not times in which he could long continue to halt between two opinions. His elevation, as it had excited the hopes of the oppressors, had excited also the terror and the rage of the oppressed. Agitation, which had, during more than a year, slumbered in Ireland, awoke with renewed vigour, and soon became more formidable than ever. The Roman Catholic Association began to exercise authority such as the Irish Parliament, in the days of its independence, had never possessed. An agitator became more powerful than the Lord Lieutenant. Violence engendered violence. Every explosion of feeling on one side of St George's Channel was answered by a louder explosion on the other. The Clare election, the Penenden Heath meeting showed that the time for evasion and delay was past. A crisis had arrived which made it absolutely necessary for the Government to take one side or the other. A simple issue was proposed to the right honourable Baronet, concession or civil war; to disgust his party, or to ruin his country. He chose the good part. He performed a duty, deeply painful, in some sense humiliating, yet in truth highly honourable to him. He came down to this House and proposed the emancipation of the Roman Catholics. Among his adherents were some who, like himself, had opposed the Roman Catholic claims merely on the ground of political expediency; and these persons readily consented to support his new policy. But not so the great body of his followers. Their zeal for Protestant ascendency was a ruling passion, a passion, *too*, which they thought it a virtue to indulge.

They had exerted themselves to raise to power the man whom they regarded as the ablest and most trusty champion of that ascendency; and he had not only abandoned the good cause, but had become its adversary. Who can forget in what a roar of obloquy their anger burst forth? Never before was such a flood of calumny and invective poured on a single head. All history, all fiction were ransacked by the old friends of the right honourable Baronet, for nicknames and allusions. One right honourable gentleman, who I am sorry not to see in his place opposite, found English prose too weak to express his indignation, and pursued his perfidious chief with reproaches borrowed from the ravings of the deserted Dido. Another Tory explored Holy Writ for parallels, and could find no parallel but Judas Iscariot. The great university which had been proud to confer on the right honourable Baronet the highest marks of favour, was foremost in affixing the brand of infamy. From Cornwall, from Northumberland, clergymen came up by hundreds to Oxford, in order to vote against him whose presence, a few days before, would have set the bells of their parish churches jingling. Nay, such was the violence of this new enmity that the old enmity of the Tories to Whigs, Radicals, Dissenters, Papists, seemed to be forgotten. That Ministry which, when it came into power at the close of 1828, was one of the strongest that the country ever saw, was, at the close of 1829, one of the weakest. It lingered another year, staggering between two parties, leaning now on one, now on the other, reeling sometimes under a blow from the right, sometimes under a blow from the left, and certain to fall as soon as the Tory opposition and the Whig opposition could find a question on which to unite. Such a question was found: and that Ministry fell without a struggle.

Now what I wish to know is this. What reason have we to believe that any administration which the right honourable Baronet can now form will have a different fate? Is he changed since 1829? Is his party changed? He is, I believe, still the same, still a statesman, moderate in opinions, cautious in temper, perfectly free from that fanaticism which inflames so many of his supporters. As to his party, I admit that it is not the same; for it is very much worse. It is decidedly fiercer and more unreasonable than it was eleven years ago. I judge by its public meetings; I judge by its journals; I judge by its pulpits, pulpits which every week resound with ribaldry and slander such as would disgrace the hustings. A change has come over the spirit of a part, I hope not the larger part, of the Tory body. It was once the glory of the Tories that, through all changes of fortune, they were animated by a steady and fervent loyalty which made even error respectable, and gave to what might otherwise have been called servility something of the manliness and nobleness of freedom. A great Tory poet, whose eminent services to the cause of monarchy had been ill requited by an ungrateful Court, boasted that

> "Loyalty is still the same,
> Whether it win or lose the game;
> True as the dial to the sun,
> Although it be not shined upon."

Toryism has now changed its character. We have lived to see a monster of a faction made up of the worst parts of the Cavalier and the worst parts of the Roundhead. We have lived to see a race of disloyal Tories. We have lived to see Tories giving themselves the airs of those insolent pikemen who puffed out their tobacco smoke in the face of Charles the First. We have lived to see Tories who, because they are not allowed to grind the people after the fashion of Strafford, turn round and revile the Sovereign in the style of Hugh Peters. I say, therefore, that, while the leader is still what he was eleven years ago, when his moderation alienated his intemperate followers, his followers are more intemperate than ever. It is my firm belief that the majority of them desire the repeal of the Emancipation Act. You say, no. But I will give reasons, and unanswerable reasons, for what I say. How, if you really wish to maintain the Emancipation Act, do you explain that clamour which you have raised, and which has resounded through the whole kingdom, about the three Popish Privy Councillors? You resent, as a calumny, the imputation that you wish to repeal the Emancipation Act; and yet you cry out that Church and State are in danger of ruin whenever the Government carries that Act into effect. If the Emancipation Act is never to be executed, why should it not be repealed? I perfectly understand that an honest man may wish it to be repealed. But I am at a loss to understand how honest men can say, "We wish the Emancipation Act to be maintained: you who accuse us of wishing to repeal it slander us foully: we value it as much as you do. Let it remain among our statutes, provided always that it remains as a dead letter. If you dare to put it in force, indeed, we will agitate against you; for, though we talk against agitation, we too can practise agitation: we will denounce you in our associations; for, though we call associations unconstitutional, we too have our associations: our divines shall preach about Jezebel: our tavern spouters shall give significant hints about James the Second." Yes, Sir, such hints have been given, hints that a sovereign who has merely executed the law, ought to be treated like a sovereign who grossly violated the law. I perfectly understand, as I said, that an honest man may disapprove of the Emancipation Act, and may wish it repealed. But can any man, who is of opinion that Roman Catholics ought to be admitted to office, honestly maintain that they now enjoy more than their fair share of power and emolument? What is the proportion of Roman Catholics to the whole population of the United Kingdom? About one-fourth. What proportion of the Privy Councillors are Roman Catholics? About one-seventieth. And what, after all, is the power of a Privy Councillor, merely as such? Are not the right honourable gentlemen opposite Privy Councillors? If a change should take place, will not the present Ministers still be Privy Councillors? It is notorious that no Privy Councillor goes to Council unless he is specially summoned. He is called Right Honourable, and he walks out of a room before Esquires and Knights. And can we seriously believe that men who think it monstrous that this honorary distinction should be given to three Roman Catholics, do sincerely desire to maintain a law by which a Roman Catholic may be Commander in Chief with all the military patronage, First Lord of the Admiralty with all the naval patronage, or First Lord of the Treasury, with the chief influence in every department of the Government. I must therefore suppose that those who join in the cry against the three Privy Councillors, are either imbecile or hostile to the Emancipation Act.

I repeat, therefore, that, while the right honourable Baronet is as free from bigotry as he was eleven years ago, his party is more bigoted than it was eleven years ago. The difficulty of governing Ireland in opposition to the feelings of the great body of the Irish people is, I apprehend, as great now as it was eleven years ago. What then must be the fate of a government formed by the right honourable Baronet? Suppose that the event of this debate should make him Prime Minister? Should I be wrong if I were to prophesy that three years hence he will be more hated and vilified by the Tory party than the present advisers of the Crown have been? Should I be wrong if I were to say that all those literary organs which now deafen us with praise of him, will then deafen us with abuse of him? Should I be wrong if I were to say that he will be burned in effigy by those who now drink his health with three times three and one cheer more? Should I be wrong if I were to say that those very gentlemen who have crowded hither to-night in order to vote him into power, will crowd hither to vote Lord Melbourne back? Once already have I seen those very persons go out into the lobby for the purpose of driving the right honourable Baronet from the high situation to which they had themselves exalted him. I went out with them myself; yes, with the whole body of the Tory country gentlemen, with the whole body of high Churchmen. All the four University Members were with us. The effect of that division was to bring Lord Grey, Lord Althorpe, Lord Brougham, Lord Durham into power. You may say that the Tories on that occasion judged ill, that they were blinded by vindictive passion, that if they had foreseen all that followed they might have acted differently. Perhaps so. But what has been once may be again. I cannot think it possible that those who are now supporting the right honourable Baronet will continue from personal attachment to support him if they see that his policy is in essentials the same as Lord Melbourne's. I believe that they have quite as much personal attachment to Lord Melbourne as to the right honourable Baronet. They follow the right honourable Baronet because his abilities, his eloquence, his experience are necessary to them; but they are but half reconciled to him. They never can forget that, in the most important crisis of his public life, he deliberately chose rather to be the victim of their injustice than its instrument. It is idle to suppose that they will be satisfied by seeing a new set of men in power. Their maxim is most truly "Measures, not men." They care not before whom the sword of state is borne at Dublin, or who wears the badge of St Patrick. What they abhor is not Lord Normanby personally or Lord Ebrington personally, but the great principles in conformity with which Ireland has been governed by Lord Normanby and by Lord Ebrington, the principles of justice, humanity, and religious freedom. What they wish to have in Ireland is not my Lord Haddington, or any other viceroy whom the right honourable Baronet may select, but the tyranny of race over race, and of creed over creed. Give them what they want; and you convulse the empire. Refuse them; and you dissolve the Tory party. I believe that the right honourable Baronet himself is by no means without apprehensions that, if he were now called to the head of affairs, he would, very speedily, have the dilemma of 1829 again before him. He certainly was not without such apprehensions when, a few months ago, he was commanded by Her Majesty to submit to her the plan of an administration. The aspect of public affairs was not at that time cheering. The Chartists were stirring in England. There were troubles in Canada. There were great discontents in the West Indies. An expedition, of which the event was still doubtful, had been sent into the heart of Asia. Yet, among many causes of anxiety, the discerning eye of the right honourable Baronet easily discerned the quarter where the great and immediate danger lay. He told the House that his difficulty would be Ireland. Now, Sir, that which would be the difficulty of his administration is the strength of the present administration. Her Majesty's Ministers enjoy the confidence of Ireland; and I believe that what ought to be done for that country will excite less discontent here if done by them than if done by him. He, I am afraid, great as his abilities are, and good as I willingly admit his intentions to be, would find it easy to lose the confidence of his partisans, but hard indeed to win the confidence of the Irish people.

It is indeed principally on account of Ireland that I feel solicitous about the issue of the present debate. I well know how little chance he who speaks on that theme has of obtaining a fair hearing. Would to God that I were addressing an audience which would judge this great controversy as it is judged by foreign nations, and as it will be judged by future ages. The passions which inflame us, the sophisms which delude us, will not last for ever. The paroxysms of faction have their appointed season. Even the madness of fanaticism is but for a day. The time is coming when our conflicts will be to others what the conflicts of our forefathers are to us; when the preachers who now disturb the State, and the politicians who now make a stalking horse of the Church, will be no more than Sacheverel and Harley. Then will be told, in language very different from that which now calls forth applause from the mob of Exeter Hall, the true story of these troubled years.

There was, it will then be said, a part of the kingdom of Queen Victoria which presented a lamentable contrast to the rest; not from the want of natural fruitfulness, for there was no richer soil in Europe; not from want of facilities for trade, for the coasts of this unhappy region were indented by bays and estuaries capable of holding all the navies of the world; not because the people were too dull to improve these advantages or too pusillanimous to defend them; for in natural quickness of wit and gallantry of spirit they ranked high among the nations. But all the bounty of nature had been made unavailing by the crimes and errors of man. In the twelfth century that fair island was a conquered province. The nineteenth century found it a conquered province still. During that long interval many great changes had taken place which had conduced to the general welfare of the empire: but those changes had only aggravated the misery of Ireland. The Reformation came, bringing to England and Scotland divine truth and intellectual liberty. To Ireland it brought only fresh calamities. Two new war cries, Protestant and Catholic, animated the old feud between the Englishry and the Irishry. The Revolution came, bringing to England and Scotland civil and spiritual freedom, to Ireland subjugation, degradation, persecution. The Union came: but though it joined legislatures, it left hearts as widely disjoined as ever. Catholic Emancipation came: but it came too late; it came as a concession made to fear, and, having excited unreasonable hopes, was naturally followed by unreasonable disappointment. Then came violent irritation, and numerous errors on both sides. Agitation produced coercion, and coercion produced fresh agitation. Difficulties and dangers went on increasing, till a government arose which, all other means having failed, determined to employ the only means that had not yet been fairly tried, justice and mercy. The State, long the stepmother of the many, and the mother only of the few, became for the first time the common parent of all the great family. The body of the people began to look on their rulers as friends. Battalion after battalion, squadron after squadron was withdrawn from districts which, as it had till then been thought, could be governed by the sword alone. Yet the security of property and the authority of law became every day more complete. Symptoms of amendment, symptoms such as cannot be either concealed or counterfeited, began to appear; and those who once despaired of the destinies of Ireland began to entertain a confident hope that she would at length take among European nations that high place to which her natural resources and the intelligence of her children entitle her to aspire.

In words such as these, I am confident, will the next generation speak of the events in our time. Relying on the sure justice of history and posterity, I care not, as far as I am personally concerned, whether we stand or fall. That issue it is for the House to decide. Whether the result will be victory or defeat, I know not. But I know that there are defeats not less glorious than any victory; and yet I have shared in some glorious victories. Those were proud and happy days;—some who sit on the benches opposite can well remember, and must, I think, regret them;—those were proud and happy days when, amidst the applauses and blessings of millions, my noble friend led us on in the great struggle for the Reform Bill; when hundreds waited round our doors till sunrise to hear how we had sped; when the great cities of the north poured forth their population on the highways to meet the mails which brought from the capital the tidings whether the battle of the people had been lost or won. Such days my noble friend cannot hope to see again. Two such triumphs would be too much for one life. But perhaps there still awaits him a less pleasing, a less exhilarating, but a not less honourable task, the task of contending against superior numbers, and through years of discomfiture, for those civil and religious liberties which are inseparably associated with the name of his illustrious house. At his side will not be wanting men who against all odds, and through all turns of fortune, in evil days and amidst evil tongues, will defend to the last, with unabated spirit, the noble principles of Milton and of Locke. We may be driven from office. We may be doomed to a life of opposition. We may be made marks for the rancour of sects which, hating each other with a deadly hatred, yet hate toleration still more. We may be exposed to the rage of Laud on one side, and of Praise-God-Barebones on the other. But justice will be done at last: and a portion of the praise which we bestow on the old champions and martyrs of freedom will not be refused by future generations to the men who have in our days endeavoured to bind together in real union races too long estranged, and to efface, by the mild influence of a parental government, the fearful traces which have been left by the misrule of ages.

A SPEECH

DELIVERED IN THE HOUSE OF COMMONS ON THE 7TH OF APRIL, 1840.

On the seventh of April, 1840, Sir James Graham moved the following resolution:

"That it appears to this House, on consideration of the papers relating to China presented to this House by command of Her Majesty, that the interruption in our commercial and friendly intercourse with that country, and the hostilities which have since taken place, are mainly to be attributed to the want of foresight and precaution on the part of Her Majesty's present advisers, in respect to our relations with China, and especially to their neglect to furnish the Superintendent at Canton with powers and instructions calculated to provide against the growing evils connected with the contraband trade in opium, and adapted to the novel and difficult situation in which the Superintendent was placed."

As soon as the question had been put from the Chair the following Speech was made.

The motion was rejected, after a debate of three nights, by 271 votes to 261.

MR SPEAKER,—If the right honourable Baronet, in rising to make an attack on the Government, was forced to own that he was unnerved and overpowered by his sense of the importance of the question with which he had to deal, one who rises to repel that attack may, without any shame, confess that he feels similar emotions. And yet I must say that the anxiety, the natural and becoming anxiety, with which Her Majesty's Ministers have awaited the judgment of the House on these papers, was not a little allayed by the terms of the right honourable Baronet's motion, and has been still more allayed by his speech. It was impossible for us to doubt either his inclination or his ability to detect and to expose any fault which we might have committed, and we may well congratulate ourselves on finding that, after the closest examination into a long series of transactions, so extensive, so complicated, and, in some respects, so disastrous, so keen an assailant could produce only so futile an accusation.

In the first place, Sir, the resolution which the right honourable Baronet has moved relates entirely to events which took place before the rupture with the Chinese Government. That rupture took place in March, 1839. The right honourable Baronet therefore does not propose to pass any censure on any step which has been taken by the Government within the last thirteen months; and it will, I think, be generally admitted, that when he abstains from censuring the proceedings of the Government, it is because the most unfriendly scrutiny can find nothing in those proceedings to censure. We by no means deny that he has a perfect right to propose a vote expressing disapprobation of what was done in 1837 or 1838. At the same time, we cannot but be gratified by learning that he approves of our present policy, and of the measures which we have taken, since the rupture, for the vindication of the national honour and for the protection of the national interests.

It is also to be observed that the right honourable Baronet has not ventured, either in his motion or in his speech, to charge Her Majesty's Ministers with any unwise or unjust act, with any act tending to lower the character of England, or to give cause of offence to China. The only sins which he imputes to them are sins of omission. His complaint is merely that they did not foresee the course which events would take at Canton, and that consequently they did not send sufficient instructions to the British resident who was stationed there. Now it is evident that such an accusation is of all accusations that which requires the fullest and most distinct proof; for it is of all accusations that which it is easiest to make and hardest to refute. A man charged with a culpable act which he has not committed has comparatively little difficulty in proving his innocence. But when the charge is merely this, that he has not, in a long and intricate series of transactions, done all that it would have been wise to do, how is he to vindicate himself? And the case which we are considering has this peculiarity, that the envoy to whom the Ministers are said to have left too large a discretion was fifteen thousand miles from them. The charge against them therefore is this, that they did not give such copious and particular directions as were sufficient, in every possible emergency, for the guidance of a functionary, who was fifteen thousand miles off. Now, Sir, I am ready to admit that, if the papers on our table related to important negotiations with a neighbouring state, if they related, for example, to a negotiation carried on with France, my noble friend the Secretary for Foreign Affairs* might well have been blamed for sending instructions so meagre and so vague to our ambassador at Paris. For my noble friend knows to-night what passed between our ambassador at Paris and the French Ministers yesterday; and a messenger despatched to-night from Downing Street will be at the Embassy in the Faubourg Saint Honoré the day after to-morrow. But that constant and minute control, which the Foreign Secretary is bound to exercise over diplomatic agents who are near, becomes an useless and pernicious meddling when exercised over agents who are separated from him by a voyage of five months. There are on both sides of the House gentlemen conversant with the affairs of India. I appeal to those gentlemen. India is nearer to us than China. India is far better known to us than China. Yet is it not universally acknowledged that India can be governed only in India? The authorities at home point out to a governor the general line of policy which they wish him to follow; but they do not send him directions as to the details of his administration. How indeed is it possible that they should send him such directions? Consider in what a state the affairs of this country would be if they were to be conducted according to directions framed by the ablest statesman residing in Bengal. A despatch goes hence asking for instructions while London is illuminating for the peace of Amiens. The instructions arrive when the French army is encamped at Boulogne, and when the whole island is up in arms to repel invasion. A despatch is written asking for instructions when Bonaparte is at Elba. The instructions come when he is at the Tuilleries. A despatch is written asking for instructions when he is at the Tuilleries. The instructions come when he is at St Helena. It would be just as impossible to govern India in London as to govern England at Calcutta. While letters are preparing here on the supposition that there is profound peace in the Carnatic, Hyder is at the gates of Fort St George. While letters are preparing here on the supposition that trade is flourishing and that the revenue exceeds the expenditure, the crops have failed, great agency houses have broken, and the government is negotiating a loan on hard terms. It is notorious that the great men who founded and preserved our Indian empire, Clive and Warren Hastings, treated all particular orders which they received from home as mere waste paper. Had not those great men had the sense and spirit so to treat such orders, we should not now have had an Indian empire. But the case of China is far stronger. For, though a person who is now writing a despatch to Fort William in Leadenhall Street or Cannon Row, cannot know what events have happened in India within the last two months, he may be very intimately acquainted with the general state of that country, with its wants, with its resources, with the habits and temper of the native population, and with the character of every prince and minister from Nepaul to Tanjore. But what does anybody here know of China? Even those Europeans who have been in that empire are almost as ignorant of it as the rest of us. Everything is covered by a veil, through which a glimpse of what is within may occasionally be caught, a glimpse just sufficient to set the imagination at work, and more likely to mislead than to inform. The right honourable Baronet has told us that an Englishman at Canton sees about as much of China as a foreigner who should land at Wapping and proceed no further would see of England. Certainly the sights and sounds of Wapping would give a foreigner but a very imperfect notion of our Government, of our manufactures, of our agriculture, of the state of learning and the arts among us. And yet the illustration is but a faint one. For a foreigner may, without seeing even Wapping, without visiting England at all, study our literature, and may thence form a vivid and correct idea of our institutions and manners. But the literature of China affords us no such help. Obstacles unparalleled in any other country which has books must be surmounted by the student who is determined to master the Chinese tongue. To learn to read is the business of half a life. It is easier to become such a linguist as Sir William Jones was than to become a good Chinese scholar. You may count upon your fingers the Europeans whose industry and genius, even when stimulated by the most fervent religious zeal, has triumphed over the difficulties of a language without an alphabet. Here then is a country separated from us physically by half the globe, separated from us still more effectually by the barriers which the most jealous of all governments and the hardest of all languages oppose to the researches of strangers. Is it then reasonable to blame my noble friend because he has not sent to our envoys in such a country as this instructions as full and precise as it would have been his duty to send to a minister at Brussels or at the Hague? The right honourable Baronet who comes forward as the accuser on this occasion is really accusing himself. He was a member of the Government of Lord Grey. He was himself concerned in framing the first instructions which were given by my noble friend to our first Superintendent at Canton. For those instructions the right honourable Baronet frankly admits that he is himself responsible. Are those instructions then very copious and minute? Not at all. They merely lay down general principles. The Resident, for example, is enjoined to respect national usages, and to avoid whatever may shock the prejudices of the Chinese; but no orders are given him as to matters of detail. In 1834 my noble friend quitted the Foreign Office, and the Duke of Wellington went to it. Did the Duke of Wellington send out those copious and exact directions with which, according to the right honourable Baronet, the Government is bound to furnish its agent in China? No, Sir; the Duke of Wellington, grown old in the conduct of great affairs, knows better than anybody that a man of very ordinary ability at Canton is likely to be a better judge of what ought to be done on an emergency arising at Canton than the greatest politician at Westminster can possibly be. His Grace, therefore, like a wise man as he is, wrote only one letter to the Superintendent, and in that letter merely referred the Superintendent to the general directions given by Lord Palmerston. And how, Sir, does the right honourable Baronet prove that, by persisting in the course which he himself took when in office, and which the Duke of Wellington took when in office, Her Majesty's present advisers have brought on that rupture which we all deplore? He has read us, from the voluminous papers which are on the table, much which has but a very remote connection with the question. He has said much about things which happened before the present Ministry existed, and much about things which have happened at Canton since the rupture; but very little that is relevant to the issue raised by the resolution which he has himself proposed. That issue is simply this, whether the mismanagement of the present Ministry produced the rupture. I listened to his long and able speech with the greatest attention, and did my best to separate that part which had any relation to his motion from a great mass of extraneous matter. If my analysis be correct, the charge which he brings against the Government consists of four articles.

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* Lord Palmerston.

The first article is, that the Government omitted to alter that part of the original instructions which directed the Superintendent to reside at Canton.

The second article is, that the Government omitted to alter that part of the original instructions which directed the Superintendent to communicate directly with the representatives of the Emperor.

The third article is, that the Government omitted to follow the advice of the Duke of Wellington, who had left at the Foreign Office a memorandum recommending that a British ship of war should be stationed in the China sea.

The fourth article is, that the Government omitted to authorise and empower the Superintendent to put down the contraband trade carried on by British subjects with China.

Such, Sir, are the counts of this indictment. Of these counts, the fourth is the only one which will require a lengthened defence. The first three may be disposed of in very few words.

As to the first, the answer is simple. It is true that the Government did not revoke that part of the instructions which directed the Superintendent to reside at Canton; and it is true that this part of the instructions did at one time cause a dispute between the Superintendent and the Chinese authorities. But it is equally true that this dispute was accommodated early in 1837; that the Chinese Government furnished the Superintendent with a passport authorising him to reside at Canton; that, during the two years which preceded the rupture, the Chinese Government made no objection to his residing at Canton; and that there is not in all this huge blue book one word indicating that the rupture was caused, directly or indirectly, by his residing at Canton. On the first count, therefore, I am confident that the verdict must be, Not Guilty.

To the second count we have a similar answer. It is true that there was a dispute with the authorities of Canton about the mode of communication. But it is equally true that this dispute was settled by a compromise. The Chinese made a concession as to the channel of communication. The Superintendent made a concession as to the form of communication. The question had been thus set at rest before the rupture, and had absolutely nothing to do with the rupture.

As to the third charge, I must tell the right honourable Baronet that he has altogether misapprehended that memorandum which he so confidently cites. The Duke of Wellington did not advise the Government to station a ship of war constantly in the China seas. The Duke, writing in 1835, at a time when the regular course of the trade had been interrupted, recommended that a ship of war should be stationed near Canton, "till the trade should take its regular peaceable course." Those are His Grace's own words. Do they not imply that, when the trade had again taken its regular peaceable course, it might be right to remove the ship of war? Well, Sir, the trade, after that memorandum was written, did resume its regular peaceable course: that the right honourable Baronet himself will admit; for it is part of his own case that Sir George Robinson had succeeded in restoring quiet and security. The third charge then is simply this,that the Ministers did not do in a time of perfect tranquillity what the Duke of Wellington thought that it would have been right to do in a time of trouble.

And now, Sir, I come to the fourth charge, the only real charge; for the other three are so futile that I hardly understand how the right honourable Baronet should have ventured to bring them forward. The fourth charge is, that the Ministers omitted to send to the Superintendent orders and powers to suppress the contraband trade, and that this omission was the cause of the rupture.

Now, Sir, let me ask whether it was not notorious, when the right honourable Baronet was in office, that British subjects carried on an extensive contraband trade with China? Did the right honourable Baronet and his colleagues instruct the Superintendent to put down that trade? Never. That trade went on while the Duke of Wellington was at the Foreign Office. Did the Duke of Wellington instruct the Superintendent to put down that trade? No, Sir, never. Are then the followers of the right honourable Baronet, are the followers of the Duke of Wellington, prepared to pass a vote of censure on us for following the example of the right honourable Baronet and of the Duke of Wellington? But I am understating my case. Since the present Ministers came into office, the reasons against sending out such instructions were much stronger than when the right honourable Baronet was in office, or when the Duke of Wellington was in office. Down to the month of May 1838, my noble friend had good grounds for believing that the Chinese Government was about to legalise the trade in opium. It is by no means easy to follow the windings of Chinese politics. But, it is certain that about four years ago the whole question was taken into serious consideration at Pekin. The attention of the Emperor was called to the undoubted fact, that the law which forbade the trade in opium was a dead letter. That law had been intended to guard against two evils, which the Chinese legislators seem to have regarded with equal horror, the importation of a noxious drug, and the exportation of the precious metals. It was found, however, that as many pounds of opium came in, and that as many pounds of silver went out, as if there had been no such law. The only effect of the prohibition was that the people learned to think lightly of imperial edicts, and that no part of the great sums expended in the purchase of the forbidden luxury came into the imperial treasury. These considerations were set forth in a most luminous and judicious state paper, drawn by Tang Tzee, President of the Sacrificial Offices. I am sorry to hear that this enlightened Minister has been turned out of office on account of his liberality: for to be turned out of office is, I apprehend, a much more serious misfortune in China than in England.

Tang Tzee argued that it was unwise to attempt to exclude opium, for that, while millions desired to have it, no law would keep it out, and that the manner in which it had long been brought in had produced an injurious effect both on the revenues of the state and on the morals of the people. Opposed to Tang Tzee was Tchu Sing, a statesman of a very different class, of a class which, I am sorry to say, is not confined to China. Tchu Sing appears to be one of those staunch conservatives who, when they find that a law is inefficient because it is too severe, imagine that they can make it efficient by making it more severe still. His historical knowledge is much on a par with his legislative wisdom. He seems to have paid particular attention to the rise and progress of our Indian Empire, and he informs his imperial master that opium is the weapon by which England effects her conquests. She had, it seems, persuaded the people of Hindostan to smoke and swallow this besotting drug, till they became so feeble in body and mind, that they were subjugated without difficulty. Some time appears to have elapsed before the Emperor made up his mind on the point in dispute between Tang Tzee and Tchu Sing. Our Superintendent, Captain Elliot, was of opinion that the decision would be in favour of the rational view taken by Tang Tzee; and such, as I can myself attest, was, during part of the year 1837, the opinion of the whole mercantile community of Calcutta. Indeed, it was expected that every ship which arrived in the Hoogley from Canton would bring the news that the opium trade had been declared legal. Nor was it known in London till May 1838, that the arguments of Tchu Sing had prevailed. Surely, Sir, it would have been most absurd to order Captain Elliot to suppress this trade at a time when everybody expected that it would soon cease to be contraband. The right honourable Baronet must, I think, himself admit that, till the month of May 1838, the Government here omitted nothing that ought to have been done.

The question before us is therefore reduced to very narrow limits. It is merely this: Ought my noble friend, in May 1838, to have sent out a despatch commanding and empowering Captain Elliot to put down the opium trade? I do not think that it would have been right or wise to send out such a despatch. Consider, Sir, with what powers it would have been necessary to arm the Superintendent. He must have been authorised to arrest, to confine, to send across the sea any British subject whom he might believe to have been concerned in introducing opium into China. I do not deny that, under the Act of Parliament, the Government might have invested him with this dictatorship. But I do say that the Government ought not lightly to invest any man with such a dictatorship, and, that if, in consequence of directions sent out by the Government, numerous subjects of Her Majesty had been taken into custody and shipped off to Bengal or to England without being permitted to wind up their affairs, this House would in all probability have called the Ministers to a strict account. Nor do I believe that by sending such directions the Government would have averted the rupture which has taken place. I will go further. I believe that, if such directions had been sent, we should now have been, as we are, at war with China; and that we should have been at war in circumstances singularly dishonourable and disastrous.

For, Sir, suppose that the Superintendent had been authorised and commanded by the Government to put forth an order prohibiting British subjects from trading in opium; suppose that he had put forth such an order; how was he to enforce it? The right honourable Baronet has had too much experience of public affairs to imagine that a lucrative trade will be suppressed by a sheet of paper and a seal. In England we have a preventive service which costs us half a million a year. We employ more than fifty cruisers to guard our coasts. We have six thousand effective men whose business is to intercept smugglers. And yet everybody knows that every article which is much desired, which is easily concealed, and which is heavily taxed, is smuggled into our island to a great extent. The quantity of brandy which comes in without paying duty is known to be not less than six hundred thousand gallons a year. Some people think that the quantity of tobacco which is imported clandestinely is as great as the quantity which goes through the custom-houses. Be this as it may, there is no doubt that the illicit importation is enormous. It has been proved before a Committee of this House that not less than four millions of pounds of tobacco have lately been smuggled into Ireland. And all this, observe, has been done in spite of the most efficient preventive service that I believe ever existed in the world. Consider too that the price of an ounce of opium is far, very far higher than the price of a pound of tobacco. Knowing this, knowing that the whole power of King, Lords, and Commons cannot here put a stop to a traffic less easy, and less profitable than the traffic in opium, can you believe that an order prohibiting the traffic in opium would have been readily obeyed? Remember by what powerful motives both the buyer and the seller would have been impelled to deal with each other. The buyer would have been driven to the seller by something little short of torture, by a physical craving as fierce and impatient as any to which our race is subject. For, when stimulants of this sort have been long used, they are desired with a rage which resembles the rage of hunger. The seller would have been driven to the buyer by the hope of vast and rapid gain. And do you imagine that the intense appetite on one side for what had become a necessary of life, and on the other for riches, would have been appeased by a few lines signed Charles Elliot? The very utmost effect which it is possible to believe that such an order would have produced would have been this, that the opium trade would have left Canton, where the dealers were under the eye of the Superintendent, and where they would have run some risk of being punished by him, and would have spread itself along the coast. If we know anything about the Chinese Government, we know this, that its coastguard is neither trusty nor efficient; and we know that a coastguard as trusty and as efficient as our own would not be able to cut off communication between the merchant longing for silver and the smoker longing for his pipe. Whole fleets of vessels would have managed to land their cargoes along the shore. Conflicts would have arisen between our countrymen and the local magistrates, who would not, like the authorities of Canton, have had some knowledge of Euopean habits and feelings. The mere *malum prohibitum* would, as usual, have produced the *mala in se*. The unlawful traffic would inevitably have led to a crowd of acts, not only unlawful, but immoral. The smuggler would, by the almost irresistible force of circumstances, have been turned into a pirate. We know that, even at Canton, where the smugglers stand in some awe of the authority of the Superintendent and of the opinion of an English society which contains many respectable persons, the illicit trade has caused many brawls and outrages. What, then, was to be expected when every captain of a ship laden with opium would have been the sole judge of his own conduct? It is easy to guess what would have happened. A boat is sent ashore to fill the water-casks and to buy fresh provisions. The provisions are refused. The sailors take them by force. Then a well is poisoned. Two or three of the ship's company die in agonies. The crew in a fury land, shoot and stab every man whom they meet, and sack and burn a village. Is this improbable? Have not similar causes repeatedly produced similar effects? Do we not know that the jealous vigilance with which Spain excluded the ships of other nations from her Transatlantic possessions turned men who would otherwise have been honest merchant adventurers into buccaneers? The same causes which raised up one race of buccaneers in the Gulf of Mexico would soon have raised up another in the China Sea. And can we doubt what would in that case have been the conduct of the Chinese authorities at Canton? We see that Commissioner Lin has arrested and confined men of spotless character, men whom he had not the slightest reason to suspect of being engaged in any illicit commerce. He did so on the ground that some of their countrymen had violated the revenue laws of China. How then would he have acted if he had learned that the red-headed devils had not merely been selling opium, but had been fighting, plundering, slaying, burning? Would he not have put forth a proclamation in his most vituperative style, setting forth that the Outside Barbarians had undertaken to stop the contraband trade, but that they had been found deceivers, that the Superintendent's edict was a mere pretence, that there was more smuggling than ever, that to the smuggling had been added robbery and murder, and that therefore he should detain all men of the guilty race as hostages till reparation should be made? I say, therefore, that, if the Ministers had done that which the right honourable Baronet blames them for not doing, we should only have reached by a worse way the point at which we now are.

I have now, Sir, gone through the four heads of the charge brought against the Government; and I say with confidence that the interruption of our friendly relations with China cannot justly be imputed to any one of the omissions mentioned by the right honourable Baronet. In truth, if I could feel assured that no gentleman would vote for the motion without attentively reading it, and considering whether the proposition which it affirms has been made out, I should have no uneasiness as to the result of this debate. But I know that no member weighs the words of a resolution for which he is asked to vote, as he would weigh the words of an affidavit which he was asked to swear. And I am aware that some persons, for whose humanity and honesty I entertain the greatest respect, are inclined to divide with the right honourable Baronet, not because they think that he has proved his case, but because they have taken up a notion that we are making war for the purpose of forcing the Government of China to admit opium into that country, and that, therefore, we richly deserve to be censured. Certainly, Sir, if we had been guilty of such absurdity and such atrocity as those gentlemen impute to us, we should deserve not only censure but condign punishment. But the imputation is altogether unfounded. Our course was clear. We may doubt indeed whether the Emperor of China judged well in listening to Tchu Sing and disgracing Tang Tzee. We may doubt whether it be a wise policy to exclude altogether from any country a drug which is often fatally abused, but which to those who use it rightly is one of the most precious boons vouchsafed by Providence to man, powerful to assuage pain, to soothe irritation, and to restore health. We may doubt whether it be a wise policy to make laws for the purpose of preventing the precious metals from being exported in the natural course of trade. We have learned from all history, and from our own experience, that revenue cutters, custom-house officers, informers, will never keep out of any country foreign luxuries of small bulk for which consumers are willing to pay high prices, and will never prevent gold and silver from going abroad in exchange for such luxuries. We cannot believe that what England with her skilfully organised fiscal system and her gigantic marine, has never been able to effect, will be accomplished by the junks which are at the command of the mandarins of China. But, whatever our opinion on these points may be, we are perfectly aware that they are points which it belongs not to us but to the Emperor of China to decide. He had a perfect right to keep out opium and to keep in silver, if he could do so by means consistent with morality and public law. If his officers seized a chest of the forbidden drug, we were not entitled to complain; nor did we complain. But when, finding that they could not suppress the contraband trade by just means, they resorted to means flagrantly unjust, when they imprisoned our innocent countrymen, when they insulted our Sovereign in the person of her representative, then it became our duty to demand satisfaction. Whether the opium trade be a pernicious trade is not the question. Take a parallel case: take the most execrable crime that ever was called a trade, the African slave trade. You will hardly say that a contraband trade in opium is more immoral than a contraband trade in negroes. We prohibited slave-trading: we made it felony; we made it piracy; we invited foreign powers to join with us in putting it down; to some foreign powers we paid large sums in order to obtain their co-operation; we employed our naval force to intercept the kidnappers; and yet it is notorious that, in spite of all our exertions and sacrifices, great numbers of slaves were, even as late as ten or twelve years ago, introduced from Madagascar into our own island of Mauritius. Assuredly it was our right, it was our duty, to guard the coasts of that island strictly, to stop slave ships, to bring the buyers and sellers to punishment. But suppose, Sir, that a ship under French colours was seen skulking near the island, that the Governor was fully satisfied from her build, her rigging, and her movements, that she was a slaver, and was only waiting for the night to put on shore the wretches who were in her hold. Suppose that, not having a sufficient naval force to seize this vessel, he were to arrest thirty or forty French merchants, most of whom had never been suspected of slave-trading, and were to lock them up. Suppose that he were to lay violent hands on the French consul. Suppose that the Governor were to threaten to starve his prisoners to death unless they produced the proprietor of the slaver. Would not the French Government in such a case have a right to demand reparation? And, if we refused reparation, would not the French Government have a right to exact reparation by arms? And would it be enough for us to say, "This is a wicked trade, an inhuman trade. Think of the misery of the poor creatures who are torn from their homes. Think of the horrors of the middle passage. Will you make war in order to force us to admit slaves into our colonies?" Surely the answer of the French would be, "We are not making war in order to force you to admit slaves into the Mauritius. By all means keep them out. By all means punish every man, French or English, whom you can convict of bringing them in. What we complain of is that you have confounded the innocent with the guilty, and that you have acted towards the representative of our government in a manner inconsistent with the law of nations. Do not, in your zeal for one great principle, trample on all the other great principles of morality." Just such are the grounds on which Her Majesty has demanded reparation from China. And was it not time? See, Sir, see how rapidly injury has followed injury. The Imperial Commissioner, emboldened by the facility with which he had perpetrated the first outrage, and utterly ignorant of the relative position of his country and ours in the scale of power and civilisation, has risen in his requisitions. He began by confiscating property. His next demand was for innocent blood. A Chinese had been slain. Careful inquiry was made; but it was impossible to ascertain who was the slayer, or even to what nation the slayer belonged. No matter. It was notified to the Superintendent that some subject of the Queen, innocent or guilty, must be delivered up to suffer death. The Superintendent refused to comply. Then our countrymen at Canton were seized. Those who were at Macao were driven thence: not men alone, but women with child, babies at the breast. The fugitives begged in vain for a morsel of bread. Our Lascars, people of a different colour from ours, but still our fellow-subjects, were flung into the sea. An English gentleman was barbarously mutilated. And was this to be borne? I am far from thinking that we ought, in our dealings with such a people as the Chinese, to be litigious on points of etiquette. The place of our country among the nations of the world is not so mean or so ill ascertained that we need resent mere impertinence, which is the effect of a very pitiable ignorance. Conscious of superior power, we can bear to hear our Sovereign described as a tributary of the Celestial Empire. Conscious of superior knowledge we can bear to hear ourselves described as savages destitute of every useful art. When our ambassadors were required to perform a prostration, which in Europe would have been considered as degrading, we were rather amused than irritated. It would have been unworthy of us to have recourse to arms on account of an uncivil phrase, or of a dispute about a ceremony. But this is not a question of phrases and ceremonies. The liberties and lives of Englishmen are at stake: and it is fit that all nations, civilised and uncivilised, should know that, wherever the Englishman may wander, he is followed by the eye and guarded by the power of England.

I was much touched, and so, I dare say, were many other gentlemen, by a passage in one of Captain Elliot's despatches. I mean that passage in which he describes his arrival at the factory in the moment of extreme danger. As soon as he landed he was surrounded by his countrymen, all in an agony of distress and despair. The first thing which he did was to order the British flag to be brought from his boat and planted in the balcony. The sight immediately revived the hearts of those who had a minute before given themselves up for lost. It was natural that they should look up with hope and confidence to that victorious flag. For it reminded them that they belonged to a country unaccustomed to defeat, to submission, or to shame; to a country which had exacted such reparation for the wrongs of her children as had made the ears of all who heard of it to tingle; to a country which had made the Dey of Algiers humble himself to the dust before her insulted Consul; to a country which had avenged the victims of the Black Hole on the Field of Plassey; to a country which had not degenerated since the Great Protector vowed that he would make the name of Englishman as much respected as ever had been the name of Roman citizen. They knew that, surrounded as they were by enemies, and separated by great oceans and continents from all help, not a hair of their heads would be harmed with impunity. On this part of the subject I believe that both the great contending parties in this House are agreed. I did not detect in the speech of the right honourable

Baronet,—and I listened to that speech with the closest attention,—one word indicating that he is less disposed than we to insist on full satisfaction for the great wrong which has been done. I cannot believe that the House will pass a vote of censure so grossly unjust as that which he has moved. But I rejoice to think that, whether we are censured or not, the national honour will still be safe. There may be a change of men; but, as respects China, there will be no change of measures. I have done; and have only to express my fervent hope that this most righteous quarrel may be prosecuted to a speedy and triumphant close; that the brave men to whom is intrusted the task of exacting reparation may perform their duty in such a manner as to spread, throughout regions in which the English name is hardly known, the fame not only of English skill and valour, but of English mercy and moderation; and that the overruling care of that gracious Providence which has so often brought good out of evil may make the war to which we have been forced the means of establishing a durable peace, beneficial alike to the victors and the vanquished.

A SPEECH

DELIVERED IN THE HOUSE OF COMMONS ON THE 5TH OF FEBRUARY 1841.

On the twenty-ninth of January 1841, Mr Serjeant Talfourd obtained leave to bring in a bill to amend the law of copyright. The object of this bill was to extend the term of copyright in a book to sixty years, reckoned from the death of the writer.

On the fifth of February Mr Serjeant Talfourd moved that the bill should be read a second time. In reply to him the following Speech was made. The bill was rejected by 45 votes to 38.

THOUGH, Sir, it is in some sense agreeable to approach a subject with which political animosities have nothing to do, I offer myself to your notice with some reluctance. It is painful to me to take a course which may possibly be misunderstood or misrepresented as unfriendly to the interests of literature and literary men. It is painful to me, I will add, to oppose my honourable and learned friend on a question which he has taken up from the purest motives, and which he regards with a parental interest. These feelings have hitherto kept me silent when the law of copyright has been under discussion. But as I am, on full consideration, satisfied that the measure before us will, if adopted, inflict grievous injury on the public, without conferring any compensating advantage on men of letters, I think it my duty to avow that opinion and to defend it.

The first thing to be done, Sir, is to settle on what principles the question is to be argued. Are we free to legislate for the public good, or are we not? Is this a question of expediency, or is it a question of right? Many of those who have written and petitioned against the existing state of things treat the question as one of right. The law of nature, according to them, gives to every man a sacred and indefeasible property in his own ideas, in the fruits of his own reason and imagination. The legislature has indeed the power to take away this property, just as it has the power to pass an act of attainder for cutting off an innocent man's head without a trial. But, as such an act of attainder would be legal murder, so would an act invading the right of an author to his copy be, according to these gentlemen, legal robbery.

Now, Sir, if this be so, let justice be done, cost what it may. I am not prepared, like my honourable and learned friend, to agree to a compromise between right and expediency, and to commit an injustice for the public convenience. But I must say, that his theory soars far beyond the reach of my faculties. It is not necessary to go, on the present occasion, into a metaphysical inquiry about the origin of the right of property; and certainly nothing but the strongest necessity would lead me to discuss a subject so likely to be distasteful to the House. I agree, I own, with Paley in thinking that property is the creature of the law, and that the law which creates property can be defended only on this ground, that it is a law beneficial to mankind. But it is unnecessary to debate that point. For, even if I believed in a natural right of property, independent of utility and anterior to legislation, I should still deny that this right could survive the original proprietor. Few, I apprehend, even of those who have studied in the most mystical and sentimental schools of moral philosophy, will be disposed to maintain that there is a natural law of succession older and of higher authority than any human code. If there be, it is quite certain that we have abuses to reform much more serious than any connected with the question of copyright. For this natural law can be only one; and the modes of succession in the Queen's dominions are twenty. To go no further than England, land generally descends to the eldest son. In Kent the sons share and share alike. In many districts the youngest takes the whole. Formerly a portion of a man's personal property was secured to his family; and it was only of the residue that he could dispose by will. Now he can dispose of the whole by will: but you limited his power, a few years ago, by enacting that the will should not be valid unless there were two witnesses. If a man dies intestate, his personal property generally goes according to the statute of distributions; but there are local customs which modify that statute. Now which of all these systems is conformed to the eternal standard of right? Is it primogeniture, or gavelkind, or borough English? Are wills *jure divino?* Are the two witnesses *jure divino?* Might not the *pars rationabilis* of our old law have a fair claim to be regarded as of celestial institution? Was the statute of distributions enacted in Heaven long before it was adopted by Parliament? Or is it to Custom of York, or to Custom of London, that this pre-eminence belongs? Surely, Sir, even those who hold that there is a natural right of property must admit that rules prescribing the manner in which the effects of deceased persons shall be distributed are purely arbitrary, and originate altogether in the will of the legislature. If so, Sir, there is no controversy between my honourable and learned friend and myself as to the principles on which this question is to be argued. For the existing law gives an author copyright during his natural life; nor do I propose to invade that privilege, which I should, on the contrary, be prepared to defend strenuously against any assailant. The only point in issue between us is, how long after an author's death the State shall recognise a copyright in his representatives and assigns; and it can, I think, hardly be disputed by any rational man that this is a point which the legislature is free to determine in the way which may appear to be most conducive to the general good.

We may now, therefore, I think, descend from these high regions, where we are in danger of being lost in the clouds, to firm ground and clear light. Let us look at this question like legislators, and after fairly balancing conveniences and inconveniences, pronounce between the existing law of copyright, and the law now proposed to us. The question of copyright, Sir, like most questions of civil prudence, is neither black nor white, but grey. The system of copyright has great advantages and great disadvantages; and it is our business to ascertain what these are, and then to make an arrangement under which the advantages may be as far as possible secured, and the disadvantages as far as possible excluded. The charge which I bring against my honourable and learned friend's bill is this, that it leaves the advantages nearly what they are at present, and increases the disadvantages at least fourfold.

The advantages arising from a system of copyright are obvious. It is desirable that we should have a supply of good books; we cannot have such a supply unless men of letters are liberally remunerated; and the least objectionable way of remunerating them is by means of copyright. You cannot depend for literary instruction and amusement on the leisure of men occupied in the pursuits of active life. Such men may occasionally produce compositions of great merit. But you must not look to such men for works which require deep meditation and long research. Works of that kind you can expect only from persons who make literature the business of their lives. Of these persons few will be found among the rich and the noble. The rich and the noble are not impelled to intellectual exertion by necessity. They may be impelled to intellectual exertion by the desire of distinguishing themselves, or by the desire of benefiting the community. But it is generally within these walls that they seek to signalise themselves and to serve their fellow-creatures. Both their ambition and their public spirit, in a country like this, naturally take a political turn. It is then on men whose profession is literature, and whose private means are not ample, that you must rely for a supply of valuable books. Such men must be remunerated for their literary labour. And there are only two ways in which they can be remunerated. One of those ways is patronage; the other is copyright.

There have been times in which men of letters looked, not to the public, but to the government, or to a few great men, for the reward of their exertions. It was thus in the time of Mæcenas and Pollio at Rome, of the Medici at Florence, of Louis the Fourteenth in France, of Lord Halifax and Lord Oxford in this country. Now, Sir, I well know that there are cases in which it is fit and graceful, nay, in which it is a sacred duty to reward the merits or to relieve the distresses of men of genius by the exercise of this species of liberality. But these cases are exceptions. I can conceive no system more fatal to the integrity and independence of literary men than one under which they should be taught to look for their daily bread to the favour of ministers and nobles. I can conceive no system more certain to turn those minds which are formed by nature to be the blessings and ornaments of our species into public scandals and pests.

We have, then, only one resource left. We must betake ourselves to copyright, be the inconveniences of copyright what they may. Those inconveniences, in truth, are neither few nor small. Copyright is monopoly, and produces all the effects which the general voice of mankind attributes to monopoly. My honourable and learned friend talks very contemptuously of those who are led away by the theory that monopoly makes things dear. That monopoly makes things dear is certainly a theory, as all the great truths which have been established by the experience of all ages and nations, and which are taken for granted in all reasonings, may be said to be theories. It is a theory in the same sense in which it is a theory that day and night follow each other, that lead is heavier than water, that bread nourishes, that arsenic poisons, that alcohol intoxicates. If, as my honourable and learned friend seems to think, the whole world is in the wrong on this point, if the real effect of monopoly is to make articles good and cheap, why does he stop short in his career of change? Why does he limit the operation of so salutary a principle to sixty years? Why does he consent to anything short of a perpetuity? He told us that in consenting to anything short of a perpetuity he was making a compromise between extreme right and expediency. But if his opinion about monopoly be correct, extreme right and expediency would coincide. Or rather, why should we not restore the monopoly of the East India trade to the East India Company? Why should we not revive all those old monopolies which, in Elizabeth's reign, galled our fathers so severely that, maddened by intolerable wrong, they opposed to their sovereign a resistance before which her haughty spirit quailed for the first and for the last time? Was it the cheapness and excellence of commodities that then so violently stirred the indignation of the English people? I believe, Sir, that I may safely take it for granted that the effect of monopoly generally is to make articles scarce, to make them dear, and to make them bad. And I may with equal safety challenge my honourable friend to find out any distinction between copyright and other privileges of the same kind; any reason why a monopoly of books should produce an effect directly the reverse of that which was produced by the East India Company's monopoly of tea, or by Lord Essex's monopoly of sweet wines. Thus, then, stands the case. It is good that authors should be remunerated; and the least exceptionable way of remunerating them is by a monopoly. Yet monopoly is an evil. For the sake of the good we must submit to the evil; but the evil ought not to last a day longer than is necessary for the purpose of securing the good.

Now, I will not affirm that the existing law is perfect, that it exactly hits the point at which the monopoly ought to cease; but this I confidently say, that the existing law is very much nearer that point than the law proposed by my honourable and learned friend. For consider this; the evil effects of the monopoly are proportioned to the length of its duration. But the good effects for the sake of which we bear with the evil effects are by no means proportioned to the length of its duration. A monopoly of sixty years produces twice as much evil as a monopoly of thirty years, and thrice as much evil as a monopoly of twenty years. But it is by no means the fact that a posthumous monopoly of sixty years gives to an author thrice as much pleasure and thrice as strong a motive as a posthumous monopoly of twenty years. On the contrary, the difference is so small as to be hardly perceptible. We all know how faintly we are affected by the prospect of very distant advantages, even when they are advantages which we may reasonably hope that we shall ourselves enjoy. But an advantage that is to be enjoyed more than half a century after we are dead, by somebody, we know not by whom, perhaps by somebody unborn, by somebody utterly unconnected with us, is really no motive at all to action. It is very probable that in the course of some generations land in the unexplored and unmapped heart of the Australasian continent will be very valuable. But there is none of us who would lay down five pounds for a whole province in the heart of the Australasian continent. We know, that neither we, nor anybody for whom we care, will ever receive a farthing of rent from such a province. And a man is very little moved by the thought that in the year 2000 or 2100, somebody who claims through him will employ more shepherds than Prince Esterhazy, and will have the finest house and gallery of pictures at Victoria or Sydney. Now, this is the sort of boon which my honourable and learned friend holds out to authors. Considered as a boon to them, it is a mere nullity; but considered as an impost on the public, it is no nullity, but a very serious and pernicious reality. I will take an example. Dr Johnson died fifty-six years ago. If the law were what my honourable and learned friend wishes to make it, somebody would now have the monopoly of Dr Johnson's works. Who that somebody would be it is impossible to say; but we may venture to guess. I guess, then, that it would have been some bookseller, who was the assign of another bookseller, who was the grandson of a third bookseller, who had bought the copyright from Black Frank, the doctor's servant and residuary legatee, in 1785 or 1786. Now, would the knowledge that this copyright would exist in 1841 have been a source of gratification to Johnson? Would it have stimulated his exertions? Would it have once drawn him out of his bed before noon? Would it have once cheered him under a fit of the spleen? Would it have induced him to give us one more allegory, one more life of a poet, one more imitation of Juvenal? I firmly believe not. I firmly believe that a hundred years ago, when he was writing our debates for the Gentleman's Magazine, he would very much rather have had twopence to buy a plate of shin of beef at a cook's shop underground. Considered as a reward to him, the difference between a twenty years' and sixty years' term of posthumous copyright would have been nothing or next to nothing. But is the difference nothing to us? I can buy Rasselas for sixpence; I might have had to give five shillings for it. I can buy the Dictionary, the entire genuine Dictionary, for two guineas, perhaps for less; I might have had to give five or six guineas for it. Do I grudge this to a man like Dr Johnson? Not at all. Show me that the prospect of this boon roused him to any vigorous effort, or sustained his spirits under depressing circumstances, and I am quite willing to pay the price of such an object, heavy as that price is. But what I do complain of is that my circumstances are to be worse, and Johnson's none the better; that I am to give five pounds for what to him was not worth a farthing.

The principle of copyright is this. It is a tax on readers for the purpose of giving a bounty to writers. The tax is an exceedingly bad one; it is a tax on one of the most innocent and most salutary of human pleasures; and never let us forget, that a tax on innocent pleasures is a premium on vicious pleasures. I admit, however, the necessity of giving a bounty to genius and learning. In order to give such a bounty, I willingly submit even to this severe and burdensome tax. Nay, I am ready to increase the tax, if it can be shown that by so doing I should proportionally increase the bounty. My complaint is, that my honour-and learned friend doubles, triples, quadruples, the tax, and makes scarcely any perceptible addition to the bounty. Why, Sir, what is the additional amount of taxation which would have been levied on the public for Dr Johnson's works alone, if my honourable and learned friend's bill had been the law of the land? I have not data sufficient to form an opinion. But I am confident that the taxation on his Dictionary alone would have amounted to many thousands of pounds. In reckoning the whole additional sum which the holders of his copyrights would have taken out of the pockets of the public during the last half century at twenty thousand pounds, I feel satisfied that I very greatly underrate it. Now, I again say that I think it but fair that we should pay twenty thousand pounds in consideration of twenty thousand pounds' worth of pleasure and encouragement received by Dr Johnson. But I think it very hard that we should pay twenty thousand pounds for what he would not have valued at five shillings.

My honourable and learned friend dwells on the claims of the posterity of great writers. Undoubtedly, Sir, it would be very pleasing to see a descendant of Shakespeare living in opulence on the fruits of his great ancestor's genius. A house maintained in splendour by such a patrimony would be a more interesting and striking object than Blenheim is to us, or than Strathfieldsaye will be to our children. But, unhappily, it is scarcely possible that, under any system, such a thing can come to pass.

My honourable and learned friend does not propose that copyright shall descend to the eldest son, or shall be bound up by irrevocable entail. It is to be merely personal property. It is therefore highly improbable that it will descend during sixty years or half that term from parent to child. The chance is that more people than one will have an interest in it. They will in all probability sell it and divide the proceeds. The price which a bookseller will give for it will bear no proportion to the sum which he will afterwards draw from the public, if his speculation proves successful. He will give little, if anything, more for a term of sixty years than for a term of thirty or five and twenty. The present value of a distant advantage is always small; but when there is great room to doubt whether a distant advantage will be any advantage at all, the present value sink to almost nothing. Such is the inconstancy of the public taste that no sensible man will venture to pronounce, with confidence, what the sale of any book published in our days will be in the years between 1890 and 1900. The whole fashion of thinking and writing has often undergone a change in a much shorter period than that to which my honourable and learned friend would extend posthumous copyright. What would have been considered the best literary property in the earlier part of Charles the Second's reign? I imagine Cowley's Poems. Overleap sixty years, and you are in the generation of which Pope asked, "Who now reads Cowley?" What works were ever expected with more impatience by the public than those of Lord Bolingbroke, which appeared, I think, in 1754? In 1814, no bookseller would have thanked you for the copyright of them all, if you had offered it to him for nothing. What would Paternoster Row give now for the copyright of Hayley's Triumphs of Temper, so much admired within the memory of many people still living? I say, therefore, that, from the very nature of literary property, it will almost always pass away from an author's family; and I say, that the price given for it to the family will bear a very small proportion to the tax which the purchaser, if his speculation turns out well, will in the course of a long series of years levy on the public.

If, Sir, I wished to find a strong and perfect illustration of the effects which I anticipate from long copyright, I should select,—my honourable and learned friend will be surprised,—I should select the case of Milton's granddaughter. As often as this bill has been under discussion, the fate of Milton's granddaughter has been brought forward by the advocates of monopoly. My honourable and learned friend has repeatedly told the story with great eloquence and effect. He has dilated on the sufferings, on the abject poverty, of this ill-fated woman, the last of an illustrious race. He tells us that, in the extremity of her distress, Garrick gave her a benefit, that Johnson wrote a prologue, and that the public contributed some hundreds of pounds. Was it fit, he asks, that she should receive, in this eleemosynary form, a small portion of what was in truth a debt? Why, he asks, instead of obtaining a pittance from charity, did she not live in comfort and luxury on the proceeds of the sale of her ancestor's works? But, Sir, will my honourable and learned friend tell me that this event, which he has so often and so pathetically described, was caused by the shortness of the term of copyright? Why, at that time, the duration of copyright was longer than even he, at present, proposes to make it. The monopoly lasted, not sixty years, but for ever. At the time at which Milton's granddaughter asked charity, Milton's works were the exclusive property of a bookseller. Within a few months of the day on which the benefit was given at Garrick's theatre, the holder of the copyright of Paradise Lost,

—I think it was Tonson,—applied to the Court of Chancery for an injunction against a bookseller who had published a cheap edition of the great epic poem, and obtained the injunction. The representation of Comus was, if I remember rightly, in 1750; the injunction in 1752. Here, then, is a perfect illustration of the effect of long copyright. Milton's works are the property of a single publisher. Everybody who wants them must buy them at Tonson's shop, and at Tonson's price. Whoever attempts to undersell Tonson is harassed with legal proceedings. Thousands who would gladly possess a copy of Paradise Lost, must forego that great enjoyment. And what, in the meantime, is the situation of the only person for whom we can suppose that the author, protected at such a cost to the public, was at all interested? She is reduced to utter destitution. Milton's works are under a monopoly. Milton's granddaughter is starving. The reader is pillaged; but the writer's family is not enriched. Society is taxed doubly. It has to give an exorbitant price for the poems; and it has at the same time to give alms to the only surviving descendant of the poet.

But this is not all. I think it right, Sir, to call the attention of the House to an evil, which is perhaps more to be apprehended when an author's copyright remains in the hands of his family, than when it is transferred to booksellers. I seriously fear that, if such a measure as this should be adopted, many valuable works will be either totally suppressed or grievously mutilated. I can prove that this danger is not chimerical; and I am quite certain that, if the danger be real, the safeguards which my honourable and learned friend has devised are altogether nugatory. That the danger is not chimerical may easily be shown. Most of us, I am sure, have known persons who, very erroneously as I think, but from the best motives, would not choose to reprint Fielding's novels, or Gibbon's History of the Decline and Fall of the Roman Empire. Some gentlemen may perhaps be of opinion that it would be as well if Tom Jones and Gibbon's History were never reprinted. I will not, then, dwell on these or similar cases. I will take cases respecting which it is not likely that there will be any difference of opinion here; cases, too, in which the danger of which I now speak is not matter of supposition, but matter of fact. Take Richardson's novels. Whatever I may, on the present occasion, think of my honourable and learned friend's judgment as a legislator, I must always respect his judgment as a critic. He will, I am sure, say that Richardson's novels are among the most valuable, among the most original works in our language. No writings have done more to raise the fame of English genius in foreign countries. No writings are more deeply pathetic. No writings, those of Shakspeare excepted, show more profound knowledge of the human heart. As to their moral tendency, I can cite the most respectable testimony. Dr Johnson describes Richardson as one who had taught the passions to move at the command of virtue. My dear and honoured friend, Mr Wilberforce, in his celebrated religious treatise, when speaking of the unchristian tendency of the fashionable novels of the eighteenth century, distinctly excepts Richardson from the censure. Another excellent person, whom I can never mention without respect and kindness, Mrs Hannah More, often declared in conversation, and has declared in one of her published poems, that she first learned from the writings of Richardson those principles of piety by which her life was guided. I may safely say that books celebrated as works of art through the whole civilised world, and praised for their moral tendency by Dr Johnson, by Mr Wilberforce, by Mrs Hannah More, ought not to be suppressed. Sir, it is my firm belief, that if the law had been what my honourable and learned friend proposes to make it, they would have been suppressed. I remember Richardson's grandson well; he was a clergyman in the city of London; he was a most upright and excellent man; but he had conceived a strong prejudice against works of fiction. He thought all novel-reading not only frivolous but sinful. He said,—this I state on the authority of one of his clerical brethren who is now a bishop,—he said that he had never thought it right to read one of his grandfather's books. Suppose, Sir, that the law had been what my honourable and learned friend would make it. Suppose that the copyright of Richardson's novels had descended, as might well have been the case, to this gentleman. I firmly believe, that he would have thought it sinful to give them a wide circulation. I firmly believe, that he would not for a hundred thousand pounds have deliberately done what he thought sinful. He would not have reprinted them. And what protection does my honourable and learned friend give to the public in such a case? Why, Sir, what he proposes is this: if a book is not reprinted during five years, any person who wishes to reprint it may give notice in the London Gazette: the advertisement must be repeated three times: a year must elapse; and then, if the proprietor of the copyright does not put forth a new edition, he loses his exclusive privilege. Now, what protection is this to the public? What is a new edition? Does the law define the number of copies that make an edition? Does it limit the price of a copy? Are twelve copies on large paper, charged at thirty guineas each, an edition? It has been usual, when monopolies have been granted, to prescribe numbers and to limit prices. But I do not find that my honourable and learned friend proposes to do so in the present case. And, without some such provision, the security which he offers is manifestly illusory. It is my conviction that, under such a system as that which he recommends to us, a copy of Clarissa would have been as rare as an Aldus or a Caxton.

I will give another instance. One of the most instructive, interesting, and delightful books in our language is Boswell's Life of Johnson. Now it is well known that Boswell's eldest son considered this book, considered the whole relation of Boswell to Johnson, as a blot in the escutcheon of the family. He thought, not perhaps altogether without reason, that his father had exhibited himself in a ludicrous and degrading light. And thus he became so sore and irritable that at last he could not bear to hear the Life of Johnson mentioned. Suppose that the law had been what my honourable and learned friend wishes to make it. Suppose that the copyright of Boswell's Life of Johnson had belonged, as it well might, during sixty years, to Boswell's eldest son. What would have been the consequence? An unadulterated copy of the finest biographical work in the world would have been as scarce as the first edition of Camden's Britannia.

These are strong cases. I have shown you that, if the law had been what you are now going to make it, the finest prose work of fiction in the language, the finest biographical work in the language, would very probably have been suppressed. But I have stated my case weakly. The books which I have mentioned are singularly inoffensive books, books not touching on any of those questions which drive even wise men beyond the bounds of wisdom. There are books of a very different kind, books which are the rallying points of great political and religious parties. What is likely to happen if the copyright of one of these books should by descent or transfer come into the possession of some hostile zealot? I will take a single instance. It is only fifty years since John Wesley died; and all his works, if the law had been what my honourable and learned friend wishes to make it, would now have been the property of some person or other. The sect founded by Wesley is the most numerous, the wealthiest, the most powerful, the most zealous of sects. In every parliamentary election it is a matter of the greatest importance to obtain the support of the Wesleyan Methodists. Their numerical strength is reckoned by hundreds of thousands. They hold the memory of their founder in the greatest reverence; and not without reason, for he was unquestionably a great and a good man. To his authority they constantly appeal. His works are in their eyes of the highest value. His doctrinal writings they regard as containing the best system of theology ever deduced from Scripture. His journals, interesting even to the common reader, are peculiarly interesting to the Methodist: for they contain the whole history of that singular polity which, weak and despised in its beginning, is now, after the lapse of a century, so strong, so flourishing, and so formidable. The hymns to which he gave his imprimatur are a most important part of the public worship of his followers. Now, suppose that the copyright of these works should belong to some person who holds the memory of Wesley and the doctrines and discipline of the Methodists in abhorrence. There are many such persons. The Ecclesiastical Courts are at this very time sitting on the case of a clergyman of the Established Church who refused Christian burial to a child baptized by a Methodist preacher. I took up the other day a work which is considered as among the most respectable organs of a large and growing party in the Church of England, and there I saw John Wesley designated as a forsworn priest. Suppose that the works of Wesley were suppressed. Why, Sir, such a grievance would be enough to shake the foundations of Government. Let gentlemen who are attached to the Church reflect for a moment what their feelings would be if the Book of Common Prayer were not to be reprinted for thirty or forty years, if the price of a Book of Common Prayer were run up to five or ten guineas. And then let them determine whether they will pass a law under which it is possible, under which it is probable, that so intolerable a wrong may be done to some sect consisting perhaps of half a million of persons.

I am so sensible, Sir, of the kindness with which the House has listened to me, that I will not detain you longer. I will only say this, that if the measure before us should pass, and should produce one-tenth part of the evil which it is calculated to produce, and which I fully expect it to produce, there will soon be a remedy, though of a very objectionable kind. Just as the absurd acts which prohibited the sale of game were virtually repealed by the poacher, just as many absurd revenue acts have been virtually repealed by the smuggler, so will this law be virtually repealed by piratical booksellers. At present the holder of copyright has the public feeling on his side. Those who invade copyright are regarded as knaves who take the bread out of the mouths of deserving men. Everybody is well pleased to see them restrained by the law, and compelled to refund their ill-gotten gains. No tradesman of good repute will have anything to do with such disgraceful transactions. Pass this law: and that feeling is at an end. Men very different from the present race of piratical booksellers will soon infringe this intolerable monopoly. Great masses of capital will be constantly employed in the violation of the law. Every art will be employed to evade legal pursuit; and the whole nation will be in the plot. On which side indeed should the public sympathy be when the question is whether some book as popular as Robinson Crusoe, or the Pilgrim's Progress, shall be in every cottage, or whether it shall be confined to the libraries of the rich for the advantage of the great-grandson of a bookseller who, a hundred years before, drove a hard bargain for the copyright with the author when in great distress? Remember too that, when once it ceases to be considered as wrong and discreditable to invade literary property, no person can say where the invasion will stop. The public seldom makes nice distinctions. The wholesome copyright which now exists will share in the disgrace and danger of the new copyright which you are about to create. And you will find that, in attempting to impose unreasonable restraints on the reprinting of the works of the dead, you have, to a great extent, annulled those restraints which now prevent men from pillaging and defrauding the living. If I saw, Sir, any probability that this bill could be so amended in the Committee that my objections might be removed, I would not divide the House in this stage. But I am so fully convinced that no alteration which would not seem insupportable to my honourable and learned friend, could render his measure supportable to me, that I must move, though with regret, that this bill be read a second time this day six months.

A SPEECH

DELIVERED IN A COMMITTEE OF THE HOUSE OF COMMONS ON THE 6TH OF APRIL 1842.

On the third of March 1842, Lord Mahon obtained permission to bring in a bill to amend the Law of Copyright. This bill extended the term of Copyright in a book to twenty-five years, reckoned from the death of the author.

On the sixth of April the House went into Committee on the bill, and Mr Greene took the Chair. Several divisions took place, of which the result was that the plan suggested in the following Speech was, with some modifications, adopted.

MR GREENE,—I have been amused and gratified by the remarks which my noble friend* has made on the arguments by which I prevailed on the last House of Commons to reject the bill introduced by a very able and accomplished man, Mr Serjeant Talfourd. My noble friend has done me a high and rare honour. For this is, I believe, the first occasion on which a speech made in one Parliament has been answered in another. I should not find it difficult to vindicate the soundness of the reasons which I formerly urged, to set them in a clearer light, and to fortify them by additional facts. But it seems to me that we had better discuss the bill which is now on our table than the bill which was there fourteen months ago. Glad I am to find that there is a very wide difference between the two bills, and that my noble friend, though he has tried to refute my arguments, has acted as if he had been convinced by them. I objected to the term of sixty years as far too long. My noble friend has cut that term down to twenty-five years. I warned the House that, under the provisions of Mr Serjeant Talfourd's bill, valuable works might not improbably be suppressed by the representatives of authors. My noble friend has prepared a clause which, as he thinks, will guard against that danger. I will not, therefore, waste the time of the Committee by debating points which he has conceded, but will proceed at once to the proper business of this evening.

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* Lord Mahon.

Sir, I have no objection to the principle of my noble friend's bill. Indeed, I had no objection to the principle of the bill of last year. I have long thought that the term of copyright ought to be extended. When Mr Serjeant Talfourd moved for leave to bring in his bill, I did not oppose the motion. Indeed I meant to vote for the second reading, and to reserve what I had to say for the Committee. But the learned Serjeant left me no choice. He, in strong language, begged that nobody who was disposed to reduce the term of sixty years would divide with him. "Do not," he said, "give me your support, if all that you mean to grant to men of letters is a miserable addition of fourteen or fifteen years to the present term. I do not wish for such support. I despise it." Not wishing to obtrude on the learned Serjeant a support which he despised, I had no course left but to take the sense of the House on the second reading. The circumstances are now different. My noble friend's bill is not at present a good bill; but it may be improved into a very good bill; nor will he, I am persuaded, withdraw it if it should be so improved. He and I have the same object in view; but we differ as to the best mode of attaining that object. We are equally desirous to extend the protection now enjoyed by writers. In what way it may be extended with most benefit to them and with least inconvenience to the public, is the question.

The present state of the law is this. The author of a work has a certain copyright in that work for a term of twenty-eight years. If he should live more than twenty-eight years after the publication of the work, he retains the copyright to the end of his life.

My noble friend does not propose to make any addition to the term of twenty-eight years. But he proposes that the copyright shall last twenty-five years after the author's death. Thus my noble friend makes no addition to that term which is certain, but makes a very large addition to that term which is uncertain.

My plan is different. I would make no addition to the uncertain term; but I would make a large addition to the certain term. I propose to add fourteen years to the twenty-eight years which the law now allows to an author. His copyright will, in this way, last till his death, or till the expiration of forty-two years, whichever shall first happen. And I think that I shall be able to prove to the satisfaction of the Committee that my plan will be more beneficial to literature and to literary men than the plan of my noble friend.

It must surely, Sir, be admitted that the protection which we give to books ought to be distributed as evenly as possible, that every book should have a fair share of that protection, and no book more than a fair share. It would evidently be absurd to put tickets into a wheel, with different numbers marked upon them, and to make writers draw, one a term of twenty-eight years, another a term of fifty, another a term of ninety. And yet this sort of lottery is what my noble friend proposes to establish. I know that we cannot altogether exclude chance. You have two terms of copyright; one certain, the other uncertain; and we cannot, I admit, get rid of the uncertain term. It is proper, no doubt, that an author's copyright should last during his life. But, Sir, though we cannot altogether exclude chance, we can very much diminish the share which chance must have in distributing the recompense which we wish to give to genius and learning. By every addition which we make to the certain term we diminish the influence of chance; by every addition which we make to the uncertain term we increase the influence of chance. I shall make myself best understood by putting cases. Take two eminent female writers, who died within our own memory, Madame D'Arblay and Miss Austen. As the law now stands, Miss Austen's charming novels would have only from twenty-eight to thirty-three years of copyright. For that extraordinary woman died young: she died before her genius was fully appreciated by the world. Madame D'Arblay outlived the whole generation to which she belonged. The copyright of her celebrated novel, Evelina, lasted, under the present law, sixty-two years. Surely this inequality is sufficiently great—sixty-two years of copyright for Evelina, only twenty-eight for Persuasion. But to my noble friend this inequality seems not great enough. He proposes to add twenty-five years to Madame D'Arblay's term, and not a single day to Miss Austen's term. He would give to Persuasion a copyright of only twenty-eight years, as at present, and to Evelina a copyright more than three times as long, a copyright of eighty-seven years. Now, is this reasonable? See, on the other hand, the operation of my plan. I make no addition at all to Madame D'Arblay's term of sixty-two years, which is, in my opinion, quite long enough; but I extend Miss Austen's term to forty-two years, which is, in my opinion, not too much. You see, Sir, that at present chance has too much sway in this matter: that at present the protection which the State gives to letters is very unequally given. You see that if my noble friend's plan be adopted, more will be left to chance than under the present system, and you will have such inequalities as are unknown under the present system. You see also that, under the system which I recommend, we shall have, not perfect certainty, not perfect equality, but much less uncertainty and inequality than at present.

But this is not all. My noble friend's plan is not merely to institute a lottery in which some writers will draw prizes and some will draw blanks. It is much worse than this. His lottery is so contrived that, in the vast majority of cases, the blanks will fall to the best books, and the prizes to books of inferior merit.

Take Shakspeare. My noble friend gives a longer protection than I should give to Love's Labour's Lost, and Pericles, Prince of Tyre; but he gives a shorter protection than I should give to Othello and Macbeth.

Take Milton. Milton died in 1674. The copyrights of Milton's great works would, according to my noble friend's plan, expire in 1699. Comus appeared in 1634, the Paradise Lost in 1668. To Comus, then, my noble friend would give sixty-five years of copyright, and to the Paradise Lost only thirty-one years. Is that reasonable? Comus is a noble poem: but who would rank it with the Paradise Lost? My plan would give forty-two years both to the Paradise Lost and to Comus.

Let us pass on from Milton to Dryden. My noble friend would give more than sixty years of copyright to Dryden's worst works; to the encomiastic verses on Oliver Cromwell, to the Wild Gallant, to the Rival Ladies, to other wretched pieces as bad as anything written by Flecknoe or Settle: but for Theodore and Honoria, for Tancred and Sigismunda, for Cimon and Iphigenia, for Palamon and Arcite, for Alexander's Feast, my noble friend thinks a copyright of twenty-eight years sufficient. Of all Pope's works, that to which my noble friend would give the largest measure of protection is the volume of Pastorals, remarkable only as the production of a boy. Johnson's first work was a Translation of a Book of Travels in Abyssinia, published in 1735. It was so poorly executed that in his later years he did not like to hear it mentioned. Boswell once picked up a copy of it, and told his friend that he had done so. "Do not talk about it," said Johnson: "it is a thing to be forgotten." To this performance my noble friend would give protection during the enormous term of seventy-five years. To the Lives of the Poets he would give protection during about thirty years. Well; take Henry Fielding; it matters not whom I take, but take Fielding. His early works are read only by the curious, and would not be read even by the curious, but for the fame which he acquired in the latter part of his life by works of a very different kind. What is the value of the Temple Beau, of the Intriguing Chambermaid, of half a dozen other plays of which few gentlemen have even heard the names? Yet to these worthless pieces my noble friend would give a term of copyright longer by more than twenty years than that which he would give to Tom Jones and Amelia.

Go on to Burke. His little tract, entitled The Vindication of Natural Society is certainly not without merit; but it would not be remembered in our days if it did not bear the name of Burke. To this tract my noble friend would give a copyright of near seventy years. But to the great work on the French Revolution, to the Appeal from the New to the Old Whigs, to the letters on the Regicide Peace, he would give a copyright of thirty years or little more.

And, Sir, observe that I am not selecting here and there extraordinary instances in order to make up the semblance of a case. I am taking the greatest names of our literature in chronological order. Go to other nations; go to remote ages; you will still find the general rule the same. There was no copyright at Athens or Rome; but the history of the Greek and Latin literature illustrates my argument quite as well as if copyright had existed in ancient times. Of all the plays of Sophocles, the one to which the plan of my noble friend would have given the most scanty recompense would have been that wonderful masterpiece, the Œdipus at Colonos. Who would class together the Speech of Demosthenes against his Guardians, and the Speech for the Crown? My noble friend, indeed, would not class them together. For to the Speech against the Guardians he would give a copyright of near seventy years, and to the incomparable Speech for the Crown a copyright of less than half that length. Go to Rome. My noble friend would give more than twice as long a term to Cicero's juvenile declamation in defence of Roscius Amerinus as to the Second Philippic. Go to France. My noble friend would give a far longer term to Racine's Frères Ennemis than to Athalie, and to Moliére's Etourdi than to Tartuffe. Go to Spain. My noble friend would give a longer term to forgotten works of Cervantes, works which nobody now reads, than to Don Quixote. Go to Germany. According to my noble friend's plan, of all the works of Schiller the Robbers would be the most favoured: of all the works of Goethe, the Sorrows of Werter would be the most favoured. I thank the Committee for listening so kindly to this long enumeration. Gentlemen will perceive, I am sure, that it is not from pedantry that I mention the names of so many books and authors. But just as, in our debates on civil affairs, we constantly draw illustrations from civil history, we must, in a debate about literary property, draw our illustrations from literary history. Now, Sir, I have, I think, shown from literary history that the effect of my noble friend's plan would be to give to crude and imperfect works, to third-rate and fourth-rate works, a great advantage over the highest productions of genius. It is impossible to account for the facts which I have laid before you by attributing them to mere accident. Their number is too great, their character too uniform. We must seek for some other explanation; and we shall easily find one.

It is the law of our nature that the mind shall attain its full power by slow degrees; and this is especially true of the most vigorous minds. Young men, no doubt, have often produced works of great merit; but it would be impossible to name any writer of the first order whose juvenile performances were his best. That all the most valuable books of history, of philology, of physical and metaphysical science, of divinity, of political economy, have been produced by men of mature years will hardly be disputed. The case may not be quite so clear as respects works of the imagination. And yet I know no work of the imagination of the very highest class that was ever, in any age or country, produced by a man under thirty-five. Whatever powers a youth may have received from nature, it is impossible that his taste and judgment can be ripe, that his mind can be richly stored with images, that he can have observed the vicissitudes of life, that he can have studied the nicer shades of character. How, as Marmontel very sensibly said, is a person to paint portraits who has never seen faces? On the whole, I believe that I may, without fear of contradiction, affirm this, that of the good books now extant in the world more than nineteen-twentieths were published after the writers had attained the age of forty. If this be so, it is evident that the plan of my noble friend is framed on a vicious principle. For, while he gives to juvenile productions a very much larger protection than they now enjoy, he does comparatively little for the works of men in the full maturity of their powers, and absolutely nothing for any work which is published during the last three years of the life of the writer. For, by the existing law, the copyright of such a work lasts twenty-eight years from the publication; and my noble friend gives only twenty-five years, to be reckoned from the writer's death.

What I recommend is that the certain term, reckoned from the date of publication, shall be forty-two years instead of twenty-eight years. In this arrangement there is no uncertainty, no inequality. The advantage which I propose to give will be the same to every book. No work will have so long a copyright as my noble friend gives to some books, or so short a copyright as he gives to others. No copyright will last ninety years. No copyright will end in twenty-eight years. To every book published in the course of the last seventeen years of a writer's life I give a longer term of copyright than my noble friend gives; and I am confident that no person versed in literary history will deny this,—that in general the most valuable works of an author are published in the course of the last seventeen years of his life. I will rapidly enumerate a few, and but a few, of the great works of English writers to which my plan is more favourable than my noble friend's plan. To Lear, to Macbeth, to Othello, to the Fairy Queen, to the Paradise Lost, to Bacon's Novum Organum and De Augmentis, to Locke's Essay on the Human Understanding, to Clarendon's History, to Hume's History, to Gibbon's History, to Smith's Wealth of Nations, to Addison's Spectators, to almost all the great works of Burke, to Clarissa and Sir Charles Grandison, to Joseph Andrews, Tom Jones and Amelia, and, with the single exception of Waverley, to all the novels of Sir Walter Scott, I give a longer term of copyright than my noble friend gives. Can he match that list? Does not that list contain what England has produced greatest in many various ways—poetry, philosophy, history, eloquence, wit, skilful portraiture of life and manners? I confidently therefore call on the Committee to take my plan in preference to the plan of my noble friend. I have shown that the protection which he proposes to give to letters is unequal, and unequal in the worst way. I have shown that his plan is to give protection to books in inverse proportion to their merit. I shall move when we come to the third clause of the bill to omit the words "twenty-five years," and in a subsequent part of the same clause I shall move to substitute for the words "twenty-eight years" the words "forty-two years." I earnestly hope that the Committee will adopt these amendments; and I feel the firmest conviction that my noble friend's bill, so amended, will confer a great boon on men of letters with the smallest possible inconvenience to the public.

A SPEECH

DELIVERED IN THE HOUSE OF COMMONS ON THE 3D OF MAY 1842.

On the second of May 1842, Mr Thomas Duncombe, Member for Finsbury, presented a petition, very numerously signed, of which the prayer was as follows:

"Your petitioners, therefore, exercising their just constitutional right, demand that your Honourable House, to remedy the many gross and manifest evils of which your petitioners complain, do immediately, without alteration, deduction, or addition, pass into a law the document entitled the People's Charter."

On the following day Mr Thomas Duncombe moved that the petitioners should be heard by themselves or their Counsel at the Bar of the House. The following Speech was made in opposition to the motion.

The motion was rejected by 287 votes to 49.

MR SPEAKER,—I was particularly desirous to catch your eye this evening, because, when the motion of the honourable Member of Rochdale * was under discussion, I was unable to be in my place. I understand that, on that occasion, the absence of some members of the late Government was noticed in severe terms, and was attributed to discreditable motives. As for myself, Sir, I was prevented from coming down to the House by illness: a noble friend of mine, to whom particular allusion was made, was detained elsewhere by pure accident; and I am convinced that no member of the late administration was withheld by any unworthy feeling from avowing his opinions. My own opinions I could have no motive for disguising. They have been frequently avowed, and avowed before audiences which were not likely to regard them with much favour.

I should wish, Sir, to say what I have to say in the temperate tone which has with so much propriety been preserved by the right honourable Baronet the Secretary for the Home Department; † but, if I should use any warm expression, I trust that the House will attribute it to the strength of my convictions and to my solicitude for the public interests. No person who knows me will, I am quite sure, suspect me of regarding the hundreds of thousands who have signed the petition which we are now considering, with any other feeling than cordial goodwill.

* Mr Sharman Crawford.

† Sir James Graham.

Sir, I cannot conscientiously assent to this motion. And yet I must admit that the honourable Member for Finsbury* has framed it with considerable skill. He has done his best to obtain the support of all those timid and interested politicians who think much more about the security of their seats than about the security of their country. It would be very convenient to me to give a silent vote with him. I should then have it in my power to say to the Chartists of Edinburgh, "When your petition was before the House I was on your side: I was for giving you a full hearing." I should at the same time be able to assure my Conservative constituents that I never had supported and never would support the Charter. But, Sir, though this course would be very convenient, it is one which my sense of duty will not suffer me to take. When questions of private right are before us, we hear, and we ought to hear, the arguments of the parties interested in those questions. But it has never been, and surely it ought not to be, our practice to grant a hearing to persons who petition for or against a law in which they have no other interest than that which is common between them and the whole nation. Of the many who petitioned against slavery, against the Roman Catholic claims, against the corn laws, none was suffered to harangue us at the bar in support of his views. If in the present case we depart from a general rule which everybody must admit to be a very wholesome one, what inference can reasonably be drawn from our conduct, except this, that we think the petition which we are now considering entitled to extraordinary respect, and that we have not fully made up our minds to refuse what the petitioners ask? Now, Sir, I have fully made up my mind to resist to the last the change which they urge us to make in the constitution of the kingdom. I therefore think that I should act disingenuously if I gave my voice for calling in orators whose eloquence, I am certain, will make no alteration in my opinion. I think too that if, after voting for hearing the petitioners, I should then vote against granting their prayer, I should give them just ground for accusing me of having first encouraged and then deserted them. That accusation, at least, they shall never bring against me.

The honourable Member for Westminster † has expressed a hope that the language of the petition will not be subjected to severe criticism. If he means literary criticism, I entirely agree with him. The style of this composition is safe from any censure of mine; but the substance it is absolutely necessary that we should closely examine. What the petitioners demand is this, that we do forthwith pass what is called the People's Charter into a law without alteration, diminution, or addition. This is the prayer in support of which the honourable Member for Finsbury would have us hear an argument at the bar. Is it then reasonable to say, as some gentlemen have said, that, in voting for the honourable Member's motion, they mean to vote merely for an inquiry into the causes of the public distress? If any gentleman thinks that an inquiry into the causes of the public distress would be useful, let him move for such an inquiry. I will not oppose it. But this petition does not tell us to inquire. It tells us that we are not to inquire. It directs us to pass a certain law word for word, and to pass it without the smallest delay.

I shall, Sir, notwithstanding the request or command of the petitioners, venture to exercise my right of free speech on the subject of the People's Charter. There is, among the six points of the Charter, one for which I have voted. There is another of which I decidedly approve. There are others as to which, though I do not agree with the petitioners, I could go some way to meet them. In fact, there is only one of the six points on which I am diametrically opposed to them: but unfortunately that point happens to be infinitely the most important of the six.

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* Mr Thomas Duncombe.

† Mr Leader.

One of the six points is the ballot. I have voted for the ballot; and I have seen no reason to change my opinion on that subject.

Another point is the abolition of the pecuniary qualification for members of this House. On that point I cordially agree with the petitioners. You have established a sufficient pecuniary qualification for the elector; and it therefore seems to me quite superfluous to require a pecuniary qualification from the representative. Everybody knows that many English members have only fictitious qualifications, and that the members for Scotch cities and boroughs are not required to have any qualification at all. It is surely absurd to admit the representatives of Edinburgh and Glasgow without any qualification, and at the same time to require the representative of Finsbury or Marylebone to possess a qualification or the semblance of one. If the qualification really be a security for respectability, let that security be demanded from us who sit here for Scotch towns. If, as I believe, the qualification is no security at all, why should we require it from anybody? It is no part of the old constitution of the realm. It was first established in the reign of Anne. It was established by a bad parliament for a bad purpose. It was, in fact, part of a course of legislation which, if it had not been happily interrupted, would have ended in the repeal of the Toleration Act and of the Act of Settlement.

The Chartists demand annual parliaments. There, certainly, I differ from them; but I might, perhaps, be willing to consent to some compromise. I differ from them also as to the expediency of paying the representatives of the people, and of dividing the country into electoral districts. But I do not consider these matters as vital. The kingdom might, I acknowledge, be free, great, and happy, though the members of this house received salaries, and though the present boundaries of counties and boroughs were superseded by new lines of demarcation. These, Sir, are subordinate questions. I do not of course mean that they are not important. But they are subordinate when compared with that question which still remains to be considered. The essence of the Charter is universal suffrage. If you withhold that, it matters not very much what else you grant. If you grant that, it matters not at all what else you withhold. If you grant that, the country is lost.

I have no blind attachment to ancient usages. I altogether disclaim what has been nicknamed the doctrine of finality. I have said enough to-night to show that I do not consider the settlement made by the Reform Bill as one which can last for ever. I certainly do think that an extensive change in the polity of a nation most be attended with serious evils. Still those evils may be overbalanced by advantages: and I am perfectly ready, in every case, to weigh the evils against the advantages, and to judge as well as I can which scale preponderates. I am bound by no tie to oppose any reform which I think likely to promote the public good. I will go so far as to say that I do not quite agree with those who think that they have proved the People's Charter to be absurd when they have proved that it is incompatible with the existence of the throne and of the peerage. For, though I am a faithful and loyal subject of Her Majesty, and though I sincerely wish to see the House of Lords powerful and respected, I cannot consider either monarchy or aristocracy as the ends of government. They are only means. Nations have flourished without hereditary sovereigns or assemblies of nobles; and, though I should be very sorry to see England a republic, I do not doubt that she might, as a republic, enjoy prosperity, tranquillity, and high consideration. The dread and aversion with which I regard universal suffrage would be greatly diminished, if I could believe that the worst effect which it would produce would be to give us an elective first magistrate and a senate instead of a Queen and a House of Peers. My firm conviction is that, in our country, universal suffrage is incompatible, not with this or that form of government, but with all forms of government, and with everything for the sake of which forms of government exist; that it is incompatible with property, and that it is consequently incompatible with civilisation.

It is not necessary for me in this place to go through the arguments which prove beyond dispute that on the security of property civilisation depends; that, where property is insecure, no climate however delicious, no soil however fertile, no conveniences for trade and navigation, no natural endowments of body or of mind, can prevent a nation from sinking into barbarism; that where, on the other hand, men are protected in the enjoyment of what has been created by their industry and laid up by their self-denial, society will advance in arts and in wealth notwithstanding the sterility of the earth and the inclemency of the air, notwithstanding heavy taxes and destructive wars. Those persons who say that England has been greatly misgoverned, that her legislation is defective, that her wealth has been squandered in unjust and impolitic contests with America and with France, do in fact bear the strongest testimony to the truth of my doctrine. For that our country has made and is making great progress in all that contributes to the material comfort of man is indisputable. If that progress cannot be ascribed to the wisdom of the Government, to what can we ascribe it but to the diligence, the energy, the thrift of individuals? And to what can we ascribe that diligence, that energy, that thrift, except to the security which property has during many generations enjoyed here? Such is the power of this great principle that, even in the last war, the most costly war, beyond all comparison, that ever was waged in this world, the Government could not lavish wealth so fast as the productive classes created it.

If it be admitted that on the institution of property the well-being of society depends, it follows surely that it would be madness to give supreme power in the state to a class which would not be likely to respect that institution. And, if this be conceded, it seems to me to follow that it would be madness to grant the prayer of this petition. I entertain no hope that, if we place the government of the kingdom in the hands of the majority of the males of one-and-twenty told by the head, the institution of property will be respected. If I am asked why I entertain no such hope, I answer, because the hundreds of thousands of males of twenty-one who have signed this petition tell me to entertain no such hope; because they tell me that, if I trust them with power, the first use which they will make of it will be to plunder every man in the kingdom who has a good coat on his back and a good roof over his head. God forbid that I should put an unfair construction on their language! I will read their own words. This petition, be it remembered, is an authoritative declaration of the wishes of those who, if the Charter ever becomes law, will return the great majority of the House of Commons; and these are their words: "Your petitioners complain, that they are enormously taxed to pay the interest of what is called the national debt, a debt amounting at present to eight hundred millions, being only a portion of the enormous amount expended in cruel and expensive wars for the suppression of all liberty by men not authorised by the people, and who consequently had no right to tax posterity for the outrages committed by them upon mankind." If these words mean anything, they mean that the present generation is not bound to pay the public debt incurred by our rulers in past times, and that a national bankruptcy would be both just and politic. For my part, I believe it to be impossible to make any distinction between the right of a fundholder to his dividends and the right of a landowner to his rents. And, to do the petitioners justice, I must say that they seem to be much of the same mind. They are for dealing with fundholder and landowner alike. They tell us that nothing will "unshackle labour from its misery, until the people possess that power under which all monopoly and oppression must cease ; and your petitioners respectfully mention the existing monopolies of the suffrage, of paper money, of machinery, of land, of the public press, of religion, of the means of travelling and transit, and a host of other evils too numerous to mention, all arising from class legislation." Absurd as this hubbub of words is, part of it is intelligible enough. What can the monopoly of land mean, except property in land ? The only monopoly of land which exists in England is this, that nobody can sell an acre of land which does not belong to him. And what can the monopoly of machinery mean but property in machinery ? Another monopoly which is to cease is the monopoly of the means of travelling. In other words all the canal property and railway property in the kingdom is to be confiscated. What other sense do the words bear ? And these are only specimens of the reforms which, in the language of the petition, are to unshackle labour from its misery. There remains, it seems, a host of similar monopolies too numerous to mention ; the monopoly I presume, which a draper has of his own stock of cloth ; the monopoly which a hatter has of his own stock of hats ; the monopoly which we all have of our furniture, bedding, and clothes. In short, the petitioners ask you to give them power in order that they may not leave a man of a hundred a year in the realm.

I am far from wishing to throw any blame on the ignorant crowds which have flocked to the tables where this petition was exhibited. Nothing is more natural than that the labouring people should be deceived by the arts of such men as the author of this absurd and wicked composition. We ourselves, with all our advantages of education, are often very credulous, very impatient, very shortsighted, when we are tried by pecuniary distress or bodily pain. We often resort to means of immediate relief which, as Reason tells us, if we would listen to her, are certain to aggravate our sufferings. Men of great abilities and knowledge have ruined their estates and their constitutions in this way. How then can we wonder that men less instructed than ourselves, and tried by privations such as we have never known, should be easily misled by mountebanks who promise impossibilities ? Imagine a well-meaning laborious mechanic, fondly attached to his wife and children. Bad times come. He sees the wife whom he loves grow thinner and paler every day. His little ones cry for bread, and he has none to give them. Then come the professional agitators, the tempters, and tell him that there is enough and more than enough for everybody, and that he has too little only because landed gentlemen, fundholders, bankers, manufacturers, railway proprietors, shopkeepers have too much. Is it strange that the poor man should be deluded, and should eagerly sign such a petition as this? The inequality with which wealth is distributed forces itself on everybody's notice. It is at once perceived by the eye. The reasons which irrefragably prove this inequality to be necessary to the well-being of all classes are not equally obvious. Our honest working man has not received such an education as enables him to understand that the utmost distress that he has ever known is prosperity when compared with the distress which he would have to endure if there were a single month of general anarchy and plunder. But you say, it is not the fault of the labourer that he is not well educated. Most true. It is not his fault. But, though he has no share in the fault, he will, if you are foolish enough to give him supreme power in the state, have a very large share of the punishment. You say that, if the Government had not culpably omitted to establish a good system of public instruction, the petitioners would have been fit for the elective franchise. But is that a reason for giving them the franchise when their own petition proves that they are not fit for it; when they give us fair notice that, if we let them have it, they will use it to our ruin and their own? It is not necessary now to inquire whether, with universal education, we could safely have universal suffrage. What we are asked to do is to give universal suffrage before there is universal education. Have I any unkind feeling towards these poor people? No more than I have to a sick friend who implores me to give him a glass of iced water which the physician has forbidden. No more than a humane collector in India has to those poor peasants who in a season of scarcity crowd round the granaries and beg with tears and piteous gestures that the doors may be opened and the rice distributed. I would not give the draught of water, because I know that it would be poison. I would not give up the keys of the granary, because I know that, by doing so, I should turn a scarcity into a famine. And in the same way I would not yield to the importunity of multitudes who, exasperated by suffering and blinded by ignorance, demand with wild vehemence the liberty to destroy themselves.

But it is said, You must not attach so much importance to this petition. It is very foolish, no doubt, and disgraceful to the author, be he who he may. But you must not suppose that those who signed it approve of it. They have merely put their names or their marks without weighing the sense of the document which they subscribed. Surely, Sir, of all reasons that ever were given for receiving a petition with peculiar honours, the strangest is that it expresses sentiments diametrically opposed to the real sentiments of those who have signed it. And it is a not less strange reason for giving men supreme power in a state that they sign political manifestoes of the highest importance without taking the trouble to know what the contents are. But how is it possible for us to believe that, if the petitioners had the power which they demand, they would not use it as they threaten? During a long course of years, numerous speakers and writers, some of them ignorant, others dishonest, have been constantly representing the Government as able to do, and bound to do, things which no Government can, without great injury to the country, attempt to do. Every man of sense knows that the people support the Government. But the doctrine of the Chartist philosophers is that it is the business of the Government to support the people. It is supposed by many that our rulers possess, somewhere or other, an inexhaustible storehouse of all the necessaries and conveniences of life, and, from mere hardheartedness, refuse to distribute the contents of this magazine among the poor. We have all of us read speeches and tracts in which it seemed to be taken for granted that we who sit here have the power of working miracles, of sending a shower of manna on the West Riding, of striking the earth and furnishing all the towns of Lancashire with abundance of pure water, of feeding all the cotton-spinners and weavers who are out of work with five loaves and two fishes. There is not a working man who has not heard harangues and read newspapers in which these follies are taught. And do you believe that as soon as you give the working men absolute and irresistible power they will forget all this? Yes, Sir, absolute and irresistible power. The Charter would give them no less. In every constituent body throughout the empire the working men will, if we grant the prayer of this petition, be an irresistible majority. In every constituent body capital will be placed at the feet of labour; knowledge will be borne down by ignorance; and is it possible to doubt what the result must be? The honourable Member for Bath and the honourable Member for Rochdale are now considered as very democratic members of Parliament. They would occupy a very different position in a House of Commons elected by universal suffrage, if they succeeded in obtaining seats. They would, I believe, honestly oppose every attempt to rob the public creditor. They would manfully say, "Justice and the public good require that this sum of thirty millions a year should be paid;" and they would immediately be reviled as aristocrats, monopolists, oppressors of the poor, defenders of old abuses. And as to land, is it possible to believe that the millions who have been so long and loudly told that the land is their estate, and is wrongfully kept from them, should not, when they have supreme power, use that power to enforce what they think their rights? What could follow but one vast spoliation? One vast spoliation! That would be bad enough. That would be the greatest calamity that ever fell on our country. Yet would that a single vast spoliation were the worst! No, Sir; in the lowest deep there would be a lower deep. The first spoliation would not be the last. How could it? All the causes which had produced the first spoliation would still operate. They would operate more powerfully than before. The distress would be far greater than before. The fences which now protect property would all have been broken through, levelled, swept away. The new proprietors would have no title to show to anything that they held except recent robbery. With what face then could they complain of being robbed? What would be the end of these things? Our experience, God be praised, does not enable us to predict it with certainty. We can only guess. My guess is that we should see something more horrible than can be imagined—something like the siege of Jerusalem on a far larger scale. There would be many millions of human beings, crowded in a narrow space, deprived of all those resources which alone had made it possible for them to exist in so narrow a space; trade gone; manufactures gone; credit gone. What could they do but fight for the mere sustenance of nature, and tear each other to pieces till famine, and pestilence following in the train of famine, came to turn the terrible commotion into a more terrible repose? The best event, the very best event, that I can anticipate,—and what must the state of things be, if an Englishman and a Whig calls such an event the very best?—the very best event, I say, that I can anticipate is that out of the confusion a strong military despotism may arise, and that the sword, firmly grasped by some rough hand, may give a sort of protection to the miserable wreck of all that immense prosperity and glory. But, as to the noble institutions under which our country has made such progress in liberty, in wealth, in knowledge, in arts, do not deceive yourselves into the belief that we should ever see them again. We should never see them again. We should not deserve to see them. All those nations which envy our greatness would insult our downfall, a downfall which would be all our own work; and the history of our calamities would be told thus: England had institutions which, though imperfect, yet contained within themselves the means of remedying every imperfection; those institutions her legislators wantonly and madly threw away; nor could they urge in their excuse even the wretched plea that they were deceived by false promises; for, in the very petition with the prayer of which they were weak enough to comply, they were told, in the plainest terms, that public ruin would be the effect of their compliance.

Thinking thus, Sir, I will oppose, with every faculty which God has given me, every motion which directly or indirectly tends to the granting of universal suffrage. This motion I think, tends that way. If any gentleman here is prepared to vote for universal suffrage with a full view of all the consequences of universal suffrage as they are set forth in this petition, he acts with perfect consistency in voting for this motion. But, I must say, I heard with some surprise the honourable baronet the Member for Leicester * say that, though he utterly disapproves of the petition, though he thinks of it just as I do, he wishes the petitioners to be heard at the bar in explanation of their opinions. I conceive that their opinions are quite sufficiently explained already; and to such opinions I am not disposed to pay any extraordinary mark of respect. I shall give a clear and conscientious vote against the motion of the honourable Member for Finsbury; and I conceive that the petitioners will have much less reason to complain of my open hostility than of the conduct of the honourable Member, who tries to propitiate them by consenting to hear their oratory, but has fully made up his mind not to comply with their demands.

A SPEECH

DELIVERED IN THE HOUSE OF COMMONS ON THE 9TH OF MARCH 1843.

On the ninth of March 1843, Mr Vernon Smith, Member for Northampton, made the following motion:

"That this House, having regard to the high and important functions of the Governor General of India, the mixed character of the native population, and the recent measures of the Court of Directors for discontinuing any seeming sanction to idolatry in India, is of opinion that the conduct of Lord Ellenborough in issuing the General Orders of the sixteenth of November 1842, and in addressing the letter of the same date to all the chiefs, princes, and people of India, respecting the restoration of the gates of a temple to Somnauth, is unwise, indecorous, and reprehensible."

Mr Emerson Tennent, Secretary of the Board of Control, opposed the motion. In reply to him the following Speech was made.

The motion was rejected by 242 votes to 157.

MR SPEAKER,—If the practice of the honourable gentleman, the Secretary of the Board of Control, had been in accordance with his precepts, if he

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* Sir John Easthope.

had not, after exhorting us to confine ourselves strictly to the subject before us, rambled far from that subject, I should have refrained from all digression. For in truth there is abundance to be said touching both the substance and the style of this Proclamation. I cannot, however, leave the honourable gentleman's peroration entirely unnoticed. But I assure him that I do not mean to wander from the question before us to any great distance or for any long time.

I cannot but wonder, Sir, that he who has, on this, as on former occasions, exhibited so much ability and acuteness, should have gravely represented it as a ground of complaint, that my right honourable friend the Member for Northampton has made this motion in the Governor General's absence. Does the honourable gentleman mean that this House is to be interdicted from ever considering in what manner Her Majesty's Asiatic subjects, a hundred millions in number, are governed? And how can we consider how they are governed without considering the conduct of him who is governing them? And how can we consider the conduct of him who is governing them, except in his absence? For my own part, I can say for myself, and I may, I doubt not, say for my right honourable friend the Member for Northampton, that we both of us wish, with all our hearts and souls, that we were discussing this question in the presence of Lord Ellenborough. Would to heaven, Sir, for the sake of the credit of England, and of the interests of India, that the noble lord were at this moment under our gallery! But, Sir, if there be any Governor who has no right to complain of remarks made on him in his absence, it is that Governor who, forgetting all official decorum, forgetting how important it is that, while the individuals who serve the State are changed, the State should preserve its identity, inserted in a public proclamation reflections on his predecessor, a predecessor of whom, on the present occasion, I will only say that his conduct had deserved a very different return. I am confident that no enemy of Lord Auckland, if Lord Auckland has an enemy in the House, will deny that, whatever faults he may have committed, he was faultless with respect to Lord Ellenborough. No brother could have laboured more assiduously for the interests and the honour of a brother than Lord Auckland laboured to facilitate Lord Ellenborough's arduous task, to prepare for Lord Ellenborough the means of obtaining success and glory. And what was the requital? A proclamation by Lord Ellenborough, stigmatising the conduct of Lord Auckland. And, Sir, since the honourable gentleman the Secretary of the Board of Control has thought fit to divert the debate from its proper course, I will venture to request that he, or the honourable director who sits behind him,* will vouchsafe to give us some explanations on an important point to which allusion has been made. Lord Ellenborough has been accused of having publicly announced that our troops were about to evacuate Afghanistan before he had ascertained that our captive countrymen and countrywomen had been restored to liberty. This accusation, which is certainly a serious one, the honourable gentleman, the Secretary of the Board of Control, pronounces to be a mere calumny. Now, Sir, the proclamation which announces the withdrawing of the troops bears date the first of October 1842. What I wish to know is, whether any member of the Government, or of the Court of Directors, will venture to affirm that on the first of October 1842, the Governor General knew that the prisoners had been set at liberty? I believe that no member either of the Government or of the Court of

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* Sir James Hogg.

Directors will venture to affirm any such thing. It seems certain that on the first of October the Governor General could not know that the prisoners were safe. Nevertheless, the honourable gentleman the Secretary of the Board of Control assures us that, when the proclamation was drawn up, the Governor General did know that the prisoners were safe. What is the inevitable consequence? It is this, that the date is a false date, that the proclamation was written after the first of October, and antedated? And for what reason was it antedated? I am almost ashamed to tell the House what I believe to have been the reason. I believe that Lord Ellenborough affixed the false date of the first of October to his proclamation because Lord Auckland's manifesto against Afghanistan was dated on the first of October. I believe that Lord Ellenborough wished to make the contrast between his own success and his predecessor's failure more striking, and that for the sake of this paltry, this childish, triumph, he antedated his proclamation, and made it appear to all Europe and all Asia that the English Government was indifferent to the fate of Englishmen and Englishwomen who were in a miserable captivity. If this be so, and I shall be surprised to hear any person deny that it is so, I must say that by this single act, by writing those words, the first of October, the Governor General proved himself to be a man of an ill-regulated mind, a man unfit for high public trust.

I might, Sir, if I chose to follow the example of the honourable gentleman the Secretary of the Board of Control, advert to many other matters. I might call the attention of the House to the systematic manner in which the Governor General has exerted himself to lower the character and to break the spirit of that civil service on the respectability and efficiency of which chiefly depends the happiness of a hundred millions of human beings. I might say much about the financial committee which he appointed in the hope of finding out blunders of his predecessor, but which at last found out no blunders except his own. But the question before us demands our attention. That question has two sides, a serious and a ludicrous side. Let us look first at the serious side. Sir, I disclaim in the strongest manner all intention of raising any fanatical outcry or of lending aid to any fanatical project. I would very much rather be the victim of fanaticism than its tool. If Lord Ellenborough were called in question for having given an impartial protection to the professors of different religions, or for restraining unjustifiable excesses into which Christian missionaries might have been hurried by their zeal, I would, widely as I have always differed from him in politics, have stood up in his defence, though I had stood up alone. But the charge against Lord Ellenborough is that he has insulted the religion of his own country and the religion of millions of the Queen's Asiatic subjects in order to pay honour to an idol. And this the right honourable gentleman the Secretary of the Board of Control calls a trivial charge. Sir, I think it a very grave charge. Her Majesty is the ruler of a larger heathen population than the world ever saw collected under the sceptre of a Christian sovereign since the days of the Emperor Theodosius. What the conduct of rulers in such circumstances ought to be is one of the most important moral questions, one of the most important political questions, that it is possible to conceive. There are subject to the British rule in Asia a hundred millions of people who do not profess the Christian faith. The Mahometans are a minority: but their importance is much more than proportioned to their number: for they are an united, a zealous, an ambitious, a warlike class. The great majority of the population of India consists of idolaters, blindly attached to doctrines and rites which, considered merely with reference to the temporal interests of mankind, are in the highest degree pernicious. In no part of the world has a religion ever existed more unfavourable to the moral and intellectual health of our race. The Brahminical mythology is so absurd that it necessarily debases every mind which receives it as truth ; and with this absurd mythology is bound up an absurd system of physics, an absurd geography, an absurd astronomy. Nor is this form of Paganism more favourable to art than to science. Through the whole Hindoo Pantheon you will look in vain for anything resembling those beautiful and majestic forms which stood in the shrines of ancient Greece. All is hideous, and grotesque, and ignoble. As this superstition is of all superstitions the most irrational, and of all superstitions the most inelegant, so is it of all superstitions the most immoral. Emblems of vice are objects of public worship. Acts of vice are acts of public worship. The courtesans are as much a part of the establishment of the temple, as much ministers of the god, as the priests. Crimes against life, crimes against property, are not only permitted but enjoined by this odious theology. But for our interference human victims would still be offered to the Ganges, and the widow would still be laid on the pile with the corpse of her husband, and burned alive by her own children. It is by the command and under the especial protection of one of the most powerful goddesses that the Thugs join themselves to the unsuspecting traveller, make friends with him, slip the noose round his neck, plunge their knives in his eyes, hide him in the earth, and divide his money and baggage. I have read many examinations of Thugs ; and I particularly remember an altercation which took place between two of those wretches in the presence of an English officer. One Thug reproached the other for having been so irreligious as to spare the life of a traveller when the omens indicated that their patroness required a victim. "How could you let him go? How can you expect the goddess to protect us if you disobey her commands? That is one of your North country heresies." Now, Sir, it is a difficult matter to determine in what way Christian rulers ought to deal with such superstitions as these. We might have acted as the Spaniards acted in the New World. We might have attempted to introduce our own religion by force. We might have sent missionaries among the natives at the public charge. We might have held out hopes of public employment to converts, and have imposed civil disabilities on Mahometans and Pagans. But we did none of these things; and herein we judged wisely. Our duty, as rulers, was to preserve strict neutrality on all questions merely religious: and I am not aware that we have ever swerved from strict neutrality for the purpose of making proselytes to our own faith. But we have, I am sorry to say, sometimes deviated from the right path in the opposite direction. Some Englishmen, who have held high office in India, seem to have thought that the only religion which was not entitled to toleration and to respect was Christianity. They regarded every Christian missionary with extreme jealousy and disdain ; and they suffered the most atrocious crimes, if enjoined by the Hindoo superstition, to be perpetrated in open day. It is lamentable to think how long after our power was firmly established in Bengal, we, grossly neglecting the first and plainest duty of the civil magistrate, suffered the practices of infanticide and Suttee to continue unchecked. We decorated the temples of the false gods. We provided the dancing girls. We gilded and painted the images to which our ignorant subjects bowed down. We repaired and embellished the car under the wheels of which crazy devotees flung themselves at every festival to be crushed to death. We sent guards of honour to escort pilgrims to the places of worship. We actually made oblations at the shrines of idols. All this was considered, and is still considered, by some prejudiced Anglo-Indians of the old school, as profound policy. I believe that there never was so shallow, so senseless a policy. We gained nothing by it. We lowered ourselves in the eyes of those whom we meant to flatter. We led them to believe that we attached no importance to the difference between Christianity and heathenism. Yet how vast that difference is! I altogether abstain from alluding to topics which belong to divines. I speak merely as a politician anxious for the morality and the temporal well-being of society. And, so speaking, I say that to countenance the Brahminical idolatry, and to discountenance that religion which has done so much to promote justice, and mercy, and freedom, and arts, and sciences, and good government, and domestic happiness, which has struck off the chains of the slave, which has mitigated the horrors of war, which has raised women from servants and playthings into companions and friends, is to commit high treason against humanity and civilisation.

Gradually a better system was introduced. A great man whom we have lately lost, Lord Wellesley, led the way. He prohibited the immolation of female children; and this was the most unquestionable of all his titles to the gratitude of his country. In the year 1813 Parliament gave new facilities to persons who were desirous to proceed to India as missionaries. Lord William Bentinck abolished the Suttee. Shortly afterwards the Home Government sent out to Calcutta the important and valuable despatch to which reference has been repeatedly made in the course of this discussion. That despatch Lord Glenelg wrote,—I was then at the Board of Control, and can attest the fact,—with his own hand. One paragraph, the sixty-second, is of the highest moment. I know that paragraph so well that I could repeat it word for word. It contains in short compass an entire code of regulations for the guidance of British functionaries in matters relating to the idolatry of India. The orders of the Home Government were express, that the arrangements of the temples should be left entirely to the natives. A certain discretion was of course left to the local authorities as to the time and manner of dissolving that connection which had long existed between the English Government and the Brahminical superstition. But the principle was laid down in the clearest manner. This was in February 1833. In the year 1838 another despatch was sent, which referred to the sixty-second paragraph in Lord Glenelg's despatch, and enjoined the Indian Government to observe the rules contained in that paragraph. Again, in the year 1841, precise orders were sent out on the same subject, orders which Lord Ellenborough seems to me to have studied carefully for the express purpose of disobeying them point by point, and in the most direct manner. You murmur: but only look at the orders of the Directors and at the proclamation of the Governor General. The orders are, distinctly and positively, that the British authorities in India shall have nothing to do with the temples of the natives, shall make no presents to those temples, shall not decorate those temples, shall not pay any military honour to those temples. Now, Sir, the first charge which I bring against Lord Ellenborough is, that he has been guilty of an act of gross disobedience, that he has done that which was forbidden in the strongest terms by those from whom his power is derived. The Home Government says, Do not interfere in the concerns of heathen temples. Is it denied that Lord Ellenborough has interfered in the concerns of a heathen temple? The Home Government says, Make no presents to heathen temples. Is it denied that Lord Ellenborough has proclaimed to all the world his intention to make a present to a heathen temple? The Home Government says, Do not decorate heathen temples. Is it denied that Lord Ellenborough has proclaimed to all the world his intention to decorate a heathen temple? The Home Government says, Do not send troops to do honour to heathen temples. Is it denied that Lord Ellenborough sent a body of troops to escort these gates to a heathen temple? To be sure, the honourable gentleman the Secretary of the Board of Control tries to get rid of this part of the case in rather a whimsical manner. He says that it is impossible to believe that, by sending troops to escort the gates, Lord Ellenborough can have meant to pay any mark of respect to an idol. And why? Because, says the honourable gentleman, the Court of Directors had given positive orders that troops should not be employed to pay marks of respect to idols. Why, Sir, undoubtedly, if it is to be taken for granted that Lord Ellenborough is a perfect man, if all our reasonings are to proceed on the supposition that he cannot do wrong, then I admit the force of the honourable gentleman's argument. But it seems to me a strange and dangerous thing to infer a man's innocence merely from the flagrancy of his guilt. It is certain that the Home authorities ordered the Governor General not to employ the troops in the service of a temple. It is certain that Lord Ellenborough employed the troops to escort a trophy, an oblation, which he sent to the restored temple of Somnauth. Yes, the restored temple of Somnauth. Those are his lordship's words. They have given rise to some discussion, and seem not to be understood by everybody in the same sense. We all know that this temple is in ruins. I am confident that Lord Ellenborough knew it to be in ruins, and that his intention was to rebuild it at the public charge. That is the obvious meaning of his words. But, as this meaning is so monstrous that nobody here can venture to defend it, his friends pretend that he believed the temple to have been already restored, and that he had no thought of being himself the restorer. How can I believe this? How can I believe that, when he issued this proclamation, he knew nothing about the state of the temple to which he proposed to make an offering of such importance? He evidently knew that it had once been in ruins; or he would not have called it the restored temple. Why am I to suppose that he imagined it to have been rebuilt? He had people about him who knew it well, and who could have told him that it was in ruins still. To say that he was not aware that it was in ruins is to say that he put forth his proclamation without taking the trouble to ask a single question of those who were close at hand and were perfectly competent to give him information. Why, Sir, this defence is itself an accusation. I defy the honourable gentleman the Secretary of the Board of Control, I defy all human ingenuity, to get his lordship clear off from both the horns of this dilemma. Either way, he richly deserves a parliamentary censure. Either he published this proclamation in the recklessness of utter ignorance without making the smallest inquiry; or else he, an English and a Christian Governor, meant to build a temple to a heathen god at the public charge, in direct defiance of the commands of his official superiors. Turn and twist the matter which way you will, you can make nothing else of it. The stain is like the stain of Blue Beard's key, in the nursery tale. As soon as you have scoured one side clean, the spot comes out on the other.

So much for the first charge, the charge of disobedience. It is fully made out: but it is not the heaviest charge which I bring against Lord Ellenborough. I charge him with having done that which, even if it had not been, as it was, strictly forbidden by the Home authorities, it would still have been a high crime to do. He ought to have known, without any instructions from home, that it was his duty not to take part in disputes among the false religions of the East; that it was his duty, in his official character, to show no marked preference for any of those religions, and to offer no marked insult to any. But, Sir, he has paid unseemly homage to one of those religions; he has grossly insulted another; and he has selected as the object of his homage the very worst and most degrading of those religions, and as the object of his insults the best and purest of them. The homage was paid to Lingamism. The insult was offered to Mahometanism. Lingamism is not merely idolatry, but idolatry in its most pernicious form. The honourable gentleman the Secretary of the Board of Control seemed to think that he had achieved a great victory when he had made out that his lordship's devotions had been paid, not to Vishnu, but to Siva. Sir, Vishnu is the preserving Deity of the Hindoo Mythology; Siva is the destroying Deity; and, as far as I have any preference for one of your Governor General's gods over another, I confess that my own tastes would lead me to prefer the preserving to the destroying power. Yes, Sir; the temple of Somnauth was sacred to Siva; and the honourable gentleman cannot but know by what emblem Siva is represented, and with what rites he is adored. I will say no more. The Governor General, Sir, is in some degree protected by the very magnitude of his offence. I am ashamed to name those things to which he is not ashamed to pay public reverence. This god of destruction, whose images and whose worship it would be a violation of decency to describe, is selected as the object of homage. As the object of insult is selected a religion which has borrowed much of its theology and much of its morality from Christianity, a religion which in the midst of Polytheism teaches the unity of God, and, in the midst of idolatry, strictly proscribes the worship of images. The duty of our Government is, as I said, to take no part in the disputes between Mahometans and idolaters. But, if our Government does take a part, there cannot be a doubt that Mahometanism is entitled to the preference. Lord Ellenborough is of a different opinion. He takes away the gates from a Mahometan mosque, and solemnly offers them as a gift to a Pagan temple. Morally, this is a crime. Politically, it is a blunder. Nobody who knows anything of the Mahometans of India can doubt that this affront to their faith will excite their fiercest indignation. Their susceptibility on such points is extreme. Some of the most serious disasters that have ever befallen us in India have been caused by that susceptibility. Remember what happened at Vellore in 1806, and more recently at Bangalore. The mutiny of Vellore was caused by a slight shown to the Mahometan turban; the mutiny of Bangalore, by disrespect said to have been shown to a Mahometan place of worship. If a Governor General had been induced by his zeal for Christianity to offer any affront to a mosque held in high veneration by Mussulmans, I should think that he had been guilty of indiscretion such as proved him to be unfit for his post. But to affront a mosque of peculiar dignity, not from zeal for Christianity, but for the sake of this loathsome god of destruction, is nothing short of madness. Some temporary popularity Lord Ellenborough may no doubt gain in some quarters. I hear, and I can well believe, that some bigoted Hindoos have hailed this proclamation with delight, and have begun to entertain a hope that the British Government is about to take their worship under its peculiar protection. But how long will that hope last? I presume that the right honourable Baronet the First Lord of the Treasury does not mean to suffer India to be governed on Brahminical principles. I presume that he will not allow the public revenue to be expended in rebuilding temples, adorning idols, and hiring courtesans. I have no doubt that there is already on the way to India such an admonition as will prevent Lord Ellenborough from persisting in the course on which he has entered. The consequence will be that the exultation of the Brahmins will end in mortification and anger. See then of what a complication of faults the Governor General is guilty. In order to curry favour with the Hindoos he has offered an inexpiable insult to the Mahometans; and now, in order to quiet the English, he is forced to disappoint and disgust the Hindoos. But, apart from the irritating effect which these transactions must produce on every part of the native population, is it no evil to have this continual wavering and changing? This is not the only case in which Lord Ellenborough has, with great pomp, announced intentions which he has not been able to carry into effect. It is his Lordship's habit. He put forth a notification that his Durbar was to be honoured by the presence of Dost Mahomed. Then came a notification that Dost Mahomed would not make his appearance there. In the proclamation which we are now considering his lordship announced to all the princes of India his resolution to set up these gates at Somnauth. The gates, it is now universally admitted, will not be set up there. All India will see that the Governor General has changed his mind. The change may be imputed to mere fickleness and levity. It may be imputed to the disapprobation with which his conduct has been regarded here. In either case he appears in a light in which it is much to be deplored that a Governor General should appear.

So much for the serious side of this business; and now for the ludicrous side. Even in our mirth, however, there is sadness; for it is no light thing that he who represents the British nation in India should be a jest to the people of India. We have sometimes sent them governors whom they loved, and sometimes governors whom they feared; but they never before had a governor at whom they laughed. Now, however, they laugh; and how can we blame them for laughing, when all Europe and all America are laughing too? You see, Sir, that the gentlemen opposite cannot keep their countenances. And no wonder. Was such a State paper ever seen in our language before? And what is the plea set up for all this bombast? Why, the honourable gentleman the Secretary of the Board of Control brings down to the House some translations of Persian letters from native princes. Such letters, as everybody knows, are written in a most absurd and turgid style. The honourable gentleman forces us to hear a good deal of this detestable rhetoric; and then he asks why, if the secretaries of the Nizam and the King of Oude use all these tropes and hyperboles, Lord Ellenborough should not indulge in the same sort of eloquence? The honourable gentleman might as well ask why Lord Ellenborough should not sit cross-legged, why he should not let his beard grow to his waist, why he should not wear a turban, why he should not hang trinkets all about his person, why he should not ride about Calcutta on a horse jingling with bells and glittering with false pearls. The native princes do these things; and why should not he? Why, Sir, simply because he is not a native prince, but an English Governor General. When the people of India see a Nabob or a Rajah in all his gaudy finery, they bow to him with a certain respect. They know that the splendour of his garb indicates superior rank and wealth. But if Sir Charles Metcalfe had so bedizened himself, they would have thought that he was out of his wits. They are not such fools as the honourable gentleman takes them for. Simplicity is not their fashion. But they understand and respect the simplicity of our fashions. Our plain clothing commands far more reverence than all the jewels which the most tawdry Zemindar wears; and our plain language carries with it far more weight than the florid diction of the most ingenious Persian scribe. The plain language and the plain clothing are inseparably associated in the minds of our subjects with superior knowledge, with superior energy, with superior veracity, with all the high and commanding qualities which erected, and which still uphold, our empire. Sir, if, as the speech of the honourable gentleman the Secretary of the Board of Control seems to indicate, Lord Ellenborough has adopted this style on principle, if it be his lordship's deliberate intention to mimic, in his State papers, the Asiatic modes of thought and expression, that alone would be a reason for recalling him. But the honourable gentleman is mistaken in thinking that this proclamation is in the Oriental taste. It bears no resemblance to the very bad Oriental compositions which he has read to us, nor to any other Oriental compositions that I ever saw. It is neither English nor Indian. It is not original, however; and I will tell the House where the Governor General found his models. He has apparently been studying the rants of the French Jacobins during the period of their ascendency, the Carmagnoles of the Convention, the proclamations issued by the Directory and its Proconsuls: and he has been seized with a desire to imitate those compositions. The pattern which he seems to have especially proposed to himself is the rhodomontade in which it was announced that the modern Gauls were marching to Rome in order to avenge the fate of Dumnorix and Vercingetorex. Everybody remembers those lines in which revolutionary justice is described by Mr Canning:—

"Not she in British courts who takes her stand,
The dawdling balance dangling in her hand;
But firm, erect, with keen reverted glance,
The avenging angel of regenerate France,
Who visits ancient sins on modern times,
And punishes the Pope for Cæsar's crimes."

In the same spirit and in the same style our Governor General has proclaimed his intention to retaliate on the Mussulmans beyond the mountains the insults which their ancestors, eight hundred years ago, offered to the idolatry of the Hindoos. To do justice to the Jacobins, however, I must say that they had an excuse which was wanting to the noble lord. The revolution had made almost as great a change in literary tastes as in political institutions. The old masters of French eloquence had shared the fate of the old states and of the old parliaments. The highest posts in the administration were filled by persons who had no experience of affairs, who in the general confusion had raised themselves by audacity and quickness of natural parts, uneducated men, or half educated men, who had no notion that the style in which they had heard the heroes and villains of tragedies declaim on the stage was not the style of real warriors and statesmen. But was it for an English gentleman, a man of distinguished abilities and cultivated mind, a man who had sate many years in parliament, and filled some of the highest posts in the State, to copy the productions of such a school?

But, it is said, what does it matter if the noble lord has written a foolish rhapsody which is neither prose nor verse? Is affected phraseology a subject for parliamentary censure? What great ruler can be named who has not committed errors much more serious than the penning of a few sentences of turgid nonsense? This, I admit, sounds plausible. It is quite true that very eminent men, Lord Somers, for example, Sir Robert Walpole, Lord Chatham and his son, all committed faults which did much more harm than any fault of style can do. But I beg the House to observe this, that an error which produces the most serious consequences may not necessarily prove that the man who has committed it is not a very wise man; and that, on the other hand, an error which directly produces no important consequences may prove the man who has committed it to be quite unfit for public trust. Walpole committed a ruinous error when he yielded to the public cry for war with Spain. But, notwithstanding that error, he was an eminently wise man. Caligula, on the other hand, when he marched his soldiers to the beach, made them fill their helmets with cockle-shells, and sent the shells to be placed in the Capitol as trophies of his conquests, did no great harm to anybody; but he surely proved that he was quite incapable of governing an empire. Mr Pitt's expedition to Quiberon was most ill judged, and ended in defeat and disgrace. Yet Mr Pitt was a statesman of a very high order. On the other hand, such ukases as those by which the Emperor Paul used to regulate the dress of the people of Petersburg, though they caused much less misery than the slaughter at Quiberon, proved that the Emperor Paul could not safely be trusted with power over his fellow-creatures. One day he forbade the wearing of pantaloons. Another day he forbade his subjects to comb their hair over their foreheads. Then he proscribed round hats. A young Englishman, the son of a merchant, thought to evade this decree by going about the city in a hunting cap. Then came out an edict which made it penal to wear on the head a round thing such as the English merchant's son wore. Now, Sir, I say that, when I examine the substance of Lord Ellenborough's proclamation, and consider all the consequences which that paper is likely to produce, I am forced to say that he has committed a grave moral and political offence. When I examine the style, I see that he has committed an act of eccentric folly, much of the same kind with Caligula's campaign against the cockles, and with the Emperor Paul's ukase against round hats. Consider what an extravagant selfconfidence, what a disdain for the examples of his great predecessors and for the opinions of the ablest and most experienced men who are now to be found in the Indian services, this strange document indicates. Surely it might have occurred to Lord Ellenborough that, if this kind of eloquence had been likely to produce a favourable impression on the minds of Asiatics, such Governors as Warren Hastings, Mr Elphinstone, Sir Thomas Munro, and Sir Charles Metcalfe, men who were as familiar with the language and manners of the native population of India as any man here can be with the language and manners of the French, would not have left the discovery to be made by a new comer who did not know any Eastern tongue. Surely, too, it might have occurred to the noble lord that, before he put forth such a proclamation, he would do well to ask some person who knew India intimately what the effect both on the Mahometans and Hindoos was likely to be. I firmly believe that the Governor General either did not ask advice or acted in direct opposition to advice. Mr Maddock was with his lordship as acting Secretary. Now I know enough of Mr Maddock to be quite certain that he never counselled the Governor General to publish such a paper. I will pawn my life that he either was never called upon to give an opinion, or that he gave an opinion adverse to the course which has been taken. No Governor General who was on good terms with the civil service would have been, I may say, permitted to expose himself thus. Lord William Bentinck and Lord Auckland were, to be sure, the last men in the world to think of doing such a thing as this. But if either of those noble lords, at some unlucky moment when he was not quite himself, when his mind was thrown off the balance by the pride and delight of an extraordinary success, had proposed to put forth such a proclamation, he would have been saved from committing so great a mistake by the respectful but earnest remonstrances of those in whom he placed confidence, and who were solicitous for his honour. From the appearance of this proclamation, therefore, I infer that the terms on which Lord Ellenborough is with the civil servants of the Company are such that those servants could not venture to offer him counsel when he most needed it.

For these reasons, Sir, I think the noble lord unfit for high public trust. Let us, then, consider the nature of the public trust which is now reposed in him. Are gentlemen aware that, even when he is at Calcutta, surrounded by his councillors, his single voice can carry any resolution concerning the executive administration against them all? They can object: they can protest: they can record their opinions in writing, and can require him to give in writing his reasons for persisting in his own course: but they must then submit. On the most important questions, on the question whether a war shall be declared, on the question whether a treaty shall be concluded, on the question whether the whole system of land revenue established in a great province shall be changed, his single vote weighs down the votes of all who sit at the Board with him. The right honourable Baronet opposite is a powerful minister, a more powerful minister than any that we have seen during many years. But I will venture to say that his power over the people of England is nothing when compared with the power which the Governor General possesses over the people of India. Such is Lord Ellenborough's power when he is with his council, and is to some extent held in check. But where is he now? He has given his council the slip. He is alone. He has near him no person who is entitled and bound to offer advice, asked or unasked: he asks no advice: and you cannot expect men to outstep the strict line of their official duty by obtruding advice on a superior by whom it would be ungraciously received. The danger of having a rash and flighty Governor General is sufficiently serious at the very best. But the danger of having such a Governor General up the country, eight or nine hundred miles from any person who has a right to remonstrate with him, is fearful indeed. Interests so vast, that the most sober language in which they can be described sounds hyperbolical, are entrusted to a single man; to a man who, whatever his parts may be, and they are doubtless considerable, has shown an indiscretion and temerity almost beyond belief; to a man who has been only a few months in India; to a man who takes no counsel with those who are well acquainted with India.

I cannot sit down without addressing myself to those Directors of the East India Company who are present. I exhort them to consider the heavy responsibility which rests on them. They have the power to recall Lord Ellenborough ; and I trust that they will not hesitate to exercise that power. This is the advice of one who has been their servant, who has served them loyally, and who is still sincerely anxious for their credit and for the welfare of the empire of which they are the guardians. But if, from whatever cause, they are unwilling to recall the noble lord, then I implore them to take care that he be immediately ordered to return to Calcutta. Who can say what new freak we may hear of by the next mail? I am quite confident that neither the Court of Directors nor Her Majesty's Ministers can look forward to the arrival of that mail without great uneasiness. Therefore I say, send Lord Ellenborough back to Calcutta. There at least he will find persons who have a right to advise him and to expostulate with him, and who will, I doubt not, have also the spirit to do so. It is something that he will be forced to record his reasons for what he does. It is something that he will be forced to hear reasons against his propositions. It is something that a delay, though only of twenty-four hours, will be interposed between the first conception of a wild scheme and the execution. I am afraid that these checks will not be sufficient to prevent much evil : but they are not absolutely nugatory. I entreat the Directors to consider in what a position they will stand if, in consequence of their neglect, some serious calamity should befall the country which is confided to their care. I will only say, in conclusion, that, if there be any use in having a Council of India, if it be not meant that the members of Council should draw large salaries for doing nothing, if they are really appointed for the purpose of assisting and restraining the Governor, it is to the last degree absurd that their powers should be in abeyance when there is a Governor who, of all the the Governors that ever England sent to the East, stands most in need both of assistance and of restraint.

A SPEECH

DELIVERED IN THE HOUSE OF COMMONS ON THE 19TH OF FEBRUARY 1844.

On the thirteenth of February 1844, Lord John Russell moved for a Committee of the whole House to take into consideration the state of Ireland. After a discussion of nine nights the motion was rejected by 324 votes to 225. On the fifth night of the debate the following Speech was made.

I CANNOT refrain, Sir, from congratulating you and the House that I did not catch your eye when I rose before. I should have been extremely sorry to have prevented any Irish member from addressing the House on a question so interesting to Ireland, but peculiarly sorry to have stood in the way of the honourable gentleman who to-night pleaded the cause of his country with so much force and eloquence.*

* Mr J. O'Brien.

I am sorry to say that I cannot reconcile it to my conscience to follow the advice which has been just given me by my honourable friend the Member for Pomfret,* with all the authority which, as he has reminded us, belongs to his venerable youth. I cannot at all agree with him in thinking that the wisest thing that we can do is to suffer Her Majesty's Ministers to go on in their own way, seeing that the way in which they have long been going on is an exceedingly bad one. I support the motion of my noble friend for these plain reasons.

First, I hold that Ireland is in a most unsatisfactory, indeed in a most dangerous, state.

Secondly, I hold that for the state in which Ireland is Her Majesty's Ministers are in a great measure accountable, and that they have not shown, either as legislators or as administrators, that they are capable of remedying the evils which they have caused.

Now, Sir, if I make out these two propositions, it will follow that it is the constitutional right and duty of the representatives of the nation to interfere; and I conceive that my noble friend, by moving for a Committee of the whole House, has proposed a mode of interference which is both parliamentary and convenient.

My first proposition, Sir, will scarcely be disputed. Both sides of the House are fully agreed in thinking that the condition of Ireland may well excite great anxiety and apprehension. That island, in extent about one fourth of the United Kingdom, in population more than one-fourth, superior probably in natural fertility to any area of equal size in Europe, possessed of natural facilities for trade such as can nowhere else be found in an equal extent of coast, an inexhaustible nursery of gallant soldiers, a country far more important to the prosperity, the strength, the dignity of this great empire than all our distant dependencies together, than the Canadas and the West Indies added to Southern Africa, to Australasia, to Ceylon, and to the vast dominions of the Moguls, that island, Sir, is acknowledged by all to be so ill affected and so turbulent that it must, in any estimate of our power, be not added but deducted. You admit that you govern that island, not as you govern England and Scotland, but as you govern your new conquests in Scinde; not by means of the respect which the people feel for the laws, but by means of bayonets, of artillery, of entrenched camps.

My first proposition, then, I take to be conceded. Ireland is in a dangerous state. The question which remains to be considered is, whether for the state in which Ireland is Her Majesty's Ministers are to be held accountable.

Now, Sir, I at once admit that the distempers of Ireland must in part be attributed to causes for which neither Her Majesty's present Ministers nor any public men now living can justly be held accountable. I will not trouble the House with a long dissertation on those causes. But it is necessary, I think, to take at least a rapid glance at them: and in order to do so, Sir, we must go back to a period not only anterior to the birth of the statesmen who are now arrayed against each other on the right and left of your chair, but anterior to the birth even of the great parties of which those statesmen are the leaders; anterior to the days when the names of Tory and Whig, of court party and country party, of cavalier and roundhead, came into use; anterior to the existence of those Puritans to whom the honourable Member for Shrewsbury,† in a very ingenious speech, ascribed all the calamities of Ireland.

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* Mr R. Milnes.

† Mr Disraeli.

The primary cause is, no doubt, the manner in which Ireland became subject to the English crown. The annexation was effected by conquest, and by conquest of a peculiar kind. It was not a conquest such as we have been accustomed to see in modern Europe. It was not a conquest like that which united Artois and Franche Comté to France, or Silesia to Prussia. It was the conquest of a race by a race, such a conquest as that which established the dominion of the Spaniard over the American Indian, or of the Mahratta over the peasant of Guzerat or Tanjore. Of all forms of tyranny, I believe that the worst is that of a nation over a nation. Populations separated by seas and mountain ridges may call each other natural enemies, may wage long wars with each other, may recount with pride the victories which they have gained over each other, and point to the flags, the guns, the ships which they have won from each other. But no enmity that ever existed between such populations approaches in bitterness the mutual enmity felt by populations which are locally intermingled, but which have never morally and politically amalgamated; and such were the Englishry and the Irishry. Yet it might have been hoped that the lapse of time and the progress of civilisation would have effaced the distinction between the oppressors and the oppressed. Our island had suffered cruelly from the same evil. Here the Saxon had trampled on the Celt, the Dane on the Saxon, the Norman on Celt, Saxon, and Dane. Yet in the course of ages all the four races had been fused together to form the great English people. A similar fusion would probably have taken place in Ireland, but for the Reformation. The English settlers adopted the Protestant doctrines which were received in England. The Aborigines alone, among all the nations of the north of Europe, adhered to the ancient faith. Thus the line of demarcation between the two populations was deepened and widened. The old enmity was reinforced by a new enmity stronger still. Then came those events to which the honourable Member for Shrewsbury referred. The spirit of liberty in England was closely allied with the spirit of Puritanism, and was mortally hostile to the Papacy. Such men as Hampden, Vane, Milton, Locke, though zealous generally for civil and spiritual freedom, yet held that the Roman Catholic worship had no claim to toleration. On the other hand, all the four kings of the House of Stuart showed far more favour to Roman Catholics than to any class of Protestant nonconformists. James the First at one time had some hopes of effecting a reconciliation with the Vatican. Charles the First entered into secret engagements to grant an indulgence to Roman Catholics. Charles the Second was a concealed Roman Catholic. James the Second was an avowed Roman Catholic. Consequently, through the whole of the seventeenth century, the freedom of Ireland and the slavery of England meant the same thing. The watchwords, the badges, the names, the places, the days, which in the mind of an Englishman were associated with deliverance, prosperity, national dignity, were in the mind of an Irishman associated with bondage, ruin, and degradation. The memory of William the Third, the anniversary of the battle of the Boyne, are instances. I was much struck by a circumstance which occurred on a day which I have every reason to remember with gratitude and pride, the day on which I had the high honour of being declared one of the first two members for the great borough of Leeds. My chair was covered with orange ribands. The horses which drew it could hardly be seen for the profusion of orange-coloured finery with which they were adorned. Orange cockades were in all the hats; orange favours at all the windows. And my supporters, I need not say, were men who had, like myself, been zealous for Catholic emancipation. I could not help remarking that the badge seemed rather incongruous. But I was told that the friends of Catholic emancipation in Yorkshire had always rallied under the orange banner, that orange was the colour of Sir George Savile, who brought in that bill which caused the No Popery riots of 1780, and that the very chair in which I sate was the chair in which Lord Milton, now Earl Fitzwilliam, had triumphed after the great victory which he won in 1807 over the No Popery party, then headed by the house of Harewood. I thought how different an effect that procession would have produced at Limerick or Cork, with what howls of rage and hatred the Roman Catholic population of those cities would have pursued that orange flag which, to every Roman Catholic in Yorkshire, was the memorial of contests maintained in favour of his own dearest rights. This circumstance, however slight, well illustrates the singular contrast between the history of England and the history of Ireland.

Well, Sir, twice during the seventeenth century the Irish rose up against the English colony. Twice they were completely put down; and twice they were severely chastised. The first rebellion was crushed by Oliver Cromwell; the second by William the Third. Those great men did not use their victory exactly in the same way. The policy of Cromwell was wise, and strong, and straightforward, and cruel. It was comprised in one word, which, as Clarendon tells us, was often in the mouths of the Englishry of that time. That word was extirpation. The object of Cromwell was to make Ireland thoroughly Anglo-Saxon and Protestant. If he had lived twenty years longer he might perhaps have accomplished that work: but he died while it was incomplete; and it died with him. The policy of William, or to speak more correctly, of those whose inclinations William was under the necessity of consulting, was less able, less energetic, and, though more humane in seeming, perhaps not more humane in reality. Extirpation was not attempted. The Irish Roman Catholics were permitted to live, to be fruitful, to replenish the earth: but they were doomed to be what the Helots were in Sparta, what the Greeks were under the Ottoman, what the blacks now are at New York. Every man of the subject caste was strictly excluded from public trust. Take what path he might in life, he was crossed at every step by some vexatious restriction. It was only by being obscure and inactive that he could, on his native soil, be safe. If he aspired to be powerful and honoured, he must begin by being an exile. If he pined for military glory, he might gain a cross or perhaps a Marshal's staff in the armies of France or Austria. If his vocation was to politics, he might distinguish himself in the diplomacy of Italy or Spain. But at home he was a mere Gibeonite, a hewer of wood and a drawer of water. The statute book of Ireland was filled with enactments which furnish to the Roman Catholics but too good a ground for recriminating on us when we talk of the barbarities of Bonner and Gardiner; and the harshness of those odious laws was aggravated by a more odious adminstration. For, bad as the legislators were, the magistrates were worse still. In those evil times originated that most unhappy hostility between landlord and tenant, which is one of the peculiar curses of Ireland. Oppression and turbulence reciprocally generated each other. The combination of rustic tyrants was resisted by gangs of rustic banditti. Courts of law and juries existed only for the benefit of the dominant sect. Those priests who were revered by millions as their natural advisers and guardians, as the only authorised expositors of Christian truth, as the only authorised dispensers of the Christian sacraments, were treated by the squires and squireens of the ruling faction as no good-natured man would treat the vilest beggar. In this manner a century passed away. Then came the French Revolution and the great awakening of the mind of Europe. It would have been wonderful indeed if, when the happiest and most tranquil nations were agitated by vague discontents and vague hopes, Ireland had remained at rest. Jacobinism, it is true, was not a very natural ally of the Roman Catholic religion. But common enmities produce strange coalitions; and a strange coalition was formed. There was a third great rising of the aboriginal population of the island against English and Protestant ascendency. That rising was put down by the sword; and it became the duty of those who were at the head of affairs to consider how the victory should be used.

I shall not be suspected of being partial to the memory of Mr Pitt. But I cannot refuse to him the praise both of wisdom and of humanity, when I compare the plan which he formed in that hour of triumph with the plans of those English rulers who had before him governed Ireland. Of Mr Pitt's plan the Union was a part, an excellent and an essential part indeed, but still only a part. We shall do great injustice both to his head and to his heart, if we forget that he was permitted to carry into effect only some unconnected portions of a comprehensive and well-concerted scheme. He wished to blend, not only the parliaments, but the nations, and to make the two islands one in interest and affection. With that view the Roman Catholic disabilities were to be removed: the Roman Catholic priests were to be placed in a comfortable and honourable position; and measures were to be taken for the purpose of giving to Roman Catholics the benefits of liberal education. In truth, Mr Pitt's opinions on those subjects had, to a great extent, been derived from a mind even more powerful and capacious than his own, from the mind of Mr Burke. If the authority of these two great men had prevailed, I believe that the Union with Ireland would now have been as secure, and as much beyond the reach of agitation, as the Union with Scotland. The Parliament in College Green would have been remembered as what it was, the most tyrannical, the most venal, the most unprincipled assembly that ever sate on the face of this earth. I do not think that, by saying this, I can give offence to any gentleman from Ireland, however zealous for Repeal he may be: for I only repeat the language of Wolfe Tone. Wolfe Tone said that he had seen more deliberative assemblies than most men; that he had seen the English Parliament, the American Congress, the French Council of Elders and Council of Five Hundred, the Batavian Convention; but that he had nowhere found anything like the baseness and impudence of the scoundrels, as he called them, at Dublin. If Mr Pitt's whole plan had been carried into execution, that infamous parliament, that scandal to the name of parliament, would have perished unregretted; and the last day of its existence would have been remembered by the Roman Catholics of Ireland as the first day of their civil and religious liberty. The great boon which he would have conferred on them would have been gratefully received, because it could not have been ascribed to fear, because it would have been a boon bestowed by the powerful on the weak, by the victor on the vanquished. Unhappily, of all his projects for the benefit of Ireland the Union alone was carried into effect; and therefore that Union was an Union only in name. The Irish found that they had parted with at least the name and show of independence, and that for this sacrifice of national pride they were to receive no compensation. The Union, which ought to have been associated in their minds with freedom and justice, was associated only with disappointed hopes and forfeited pledges. Yet it was not even then too late. It was not too late in 1813. It was not too late in 1821. It was not too late in 1825. Yes: if, even in 1825, some men who then were, as they now are, high in the service of the crown, could have made up their minds to do what they were forced to do four years later, that great work of conciliation which Mr Pitt had meditated might have been accomplished. The machinery of agitation was not yet fully organized: the Government was under no strong pressure; and therefore concession might still have been received with thankfulness. That opportunity was suffered to escape; and it never returned.

In 1829, at length, concessions were made, were made largely, were made without the conditions which Mr Pitt would undoubtedly have demanded, and to which, if demanded by Mr Pitt, the whole body of Roman Catholics would have eagerly assented. But those concessions were made reluctantly, made ungraciously, made under duress, made from the mere dread of civil war. How then was it possible that they should produce contentment and repose? What could be the effect of that sudden and profuse liberality following that long and obstinate resistance to the most reasonable demands, except to teach the Irishman that he could obtain redress only by turbulence? Could he forget that he had been, during eight and twenty years, supplicating Parliament for justice, urging those unanswerable arguments which prove that the rights of conscience ought to be held sacred, claiming the performance of promises made by ministers and princes, and that he had supplicated, argued, claimed the performance of promises in vain? Could he forget that two generations of the most profound thinkers, the most brilliant wits, the most eloquent orators, had written and spoken for him in vain? Could he forget that the greatest statesmen who took his part had paid dear for their generosity? Mr Pitt endeavoured to redeem his pledge; and he was driven from office. Lord Grey and Lord Grenville endeavoured to do but a very small part of what Mr Pitt had thought right and expedient; and they were driven from office. Mr Canning took the same side; and his reward was to be worried to death by the party of which he was the brightest ornament. At length, when he was gone, the Roman Catholics began to look, not to cabinets and parliaments, but to themselves. They displayed a formidable array of physical force, and yet kept within, just within, the limits of the law. The consequence was that, in two years, more than any prudent friend had ventured to demand for them was granted to them by their enemies. Yes; within two years after Mr Canning had been laid in the transept near us, all that he would have done, and more than he could have done, was done by his persecutors. How was it possible that the whole Roman Catholic population of Ireland should not take up the notion that from England, or at least from the party which then governed and which now governs England, nothing is to be got by reason, by entreaty, by patient endurance, but everything by intimidation? That tardy repentance deserved no gratitude, and obtained none. The whole machinery of agitation was complete and in perfect order. The leaders had tasted the pleasures of popularity; the multitude had tasted the pleasures of excitement. Both the demagogue and his audience felt a craving for the daily stimulant. Grievances enough remained, God knows, to serve as pretexts for agitation: and the whole conduct of the Government had led the sufferers to believe that by agitation alone could any grievance be removed.

Such, Sir, is the history of the rise and progress of the disorders of Ireland. Misgovernment, lasting without interruption from the reign of Henry the Second to the reign of William the Fourth, has left us an immense mass of discontent, which will, no doubt, in ordinary times, make the task of any statesman whom the Queen may call to power sufficiently difficult. But though this be true, it is not less true, that the immediate causes of the extraordinary agitation which alarms us at this moment is to be found in the misconduct of Her Majesty's present advisers. For, Sir, though Ireland is always combustible, Ireland is not always on fire. We must distinguish between the chronic complaints which are to be attributed to remote causes, and the acute attack which is brought on by recent imprudence. For though there is always a predisposition to disease in that unhappy society, the violent paroxysms come only at intervals. I must own that I am indebted for some of my imagery to the right honourable Baronet the First Lord of the Treasury. When he sate on this bench, and was only a candidate for the great place which he now fills, he compared himself to a medical man at the bedside of a patient. Continuing his metaphor, I may say that his prognosis, his diagnosis, his treatment, have all been wrong. I do not deny that the case was difficult. The sufferer was of a very ill habit of body, and had formerly suffered many things of many physicians, and, among others, I must say, of the right honourable Baronet himself. Still the malady had, a very short time ago, been got under, and kept under by the judicious use of lenitives; and there was reason to hope that if that salutary regimen had been steadily followed, there would have been a speedy improvement in the general health. Unhappily, the new State hygeist chose to apply irritants which have produced a succession of convulsive fits, each more violent than that which preceded it. To drop the figure, it is impossible to doubt that Lord Melbourne's government was popular with the great body of the Roman Catholics of Ireland. It is impossible to doubt that the two Viceroys whom he sent to Ireland were more loved and honoured by the Irish people than any Viceroys before whom the sword of state has ever been borne. Under the late Government, no doubt, the empire was threatened by many dangers; but, to whatever quarter the Ministers might look with uneasy apprehension, to Ireland they could always look with confidence. When bad men raised disturbances here, when a Chartist rabble fired on the Queen's soldiers, numerous regiments could, without the smallest risk, be spared from Ireland. When a rebellion broke out in one of our colonies,—a rebellion too which it might have been expected that the Irish would regard with favour, for it was a rebellion of Roman Catholics against Protestant rulers,—even then Ireland was true to the general interests of the empire, and troops were sent from Munster and Connaught to put down insurrection in Canada. No person will deny that if, in 1840, we had unhappily been forced into war, and if a hostile army had landed in Bantry Bay, the whole population of Cork and Tipperary would have risen up to defend the throne of Her Majesty, and would have offered to the invaders a resistance as determined as would have been offered by the men of Kent or Norfolk. And by what means was this salutary effect produced? Not by great legislative reforms: for, unfortunately, that Government, though it had the will, had not the power to carry such reforms against the sense of a strong minority in this House, and of a decided majority of the Peers. No, Sir; this effect was produced merely by the wisdom, justice, and humanity with which the existing law, defective as it might be, was administered. The late Government, calumniated and thwarted at every turn, contending against the whole influence of the Established Church, and of the great body of the nobility and landed gentry, yet did show a disposition to act kindly and fairly towards Ireland, and did, to the best of its power, treat Protestants and Roman Catholics alike. If we had been as strong as our successors in parliamentary support, if we had been able to induce the two Houses to follow in legislation the same principles by which we were guided in administration, the Union with Ireland would now have been as secure from the assaults of agitators as the Union with Scotland. But this was not to be. During six years an opposition, formidable in numbers, formidable in ability, selected as the especial object of the fiercest and most pertinacious attacks those very acts of the Government which had, after centuries of mutual animosity, half reconciled the two islands. Those Lords Lieutenant who, in Ireland, were venerated as no preceding Lord Lieutenant had ever been venerated, were here reviled as no preceding Lord Lieutenant had ever been reviled. Every action, every word which was applauded by the nation committed to their care, was here imputed to them as a crime. Every bill framed by the advisers of the Crown for the benefit of Ireland was either rejected or mutilated. A few Roman Catholics of distinguished merit were appointed to situations which were indeed below their just claims, but which were higher than any member of their Church had filled during many generations. Two or three Roman Catholics were sworn of the Council; one took his seat at the Board of Treasury; another at the Board of Admiralty. There was great joy in Ireland; and no wonder. What had been done was not much; but the ban had been taken off; the Emancipation Act, which had been little more than a dead letter, was at length a reality. But in England all the underlings of the great Tory party set up a howl of rage and hatred worthy of Lord George Gordon's No Popery mob. The right honourable Baronet now at the head of the Treasury, with his usual prudence, abstained from joining in the cry, and was content to listen to it, to enjoy it, and to profit by it. But some of those who ranked next to him among the chiefs of the opposition, did not imitate his politic reserve. One great man denounced the Irish as aliens. Another called them minions of Popery. Those teachers of religion to whom millions looked up with affection and reverence were called by the Protestant press demon priests and surpliced ruffians, and were denounced from the Protestant pulpit as pontiffs of Baal, as false prophets who were to be slain with the sword. We were reminded that a Queen of the chosen people had in the old time patronised the ministers of idolatry, and that her blood had been given to the dogs. Not content with throwing out or frittering down every law beneficial to Ireland, not content with censuring in severe terms every act of the executive government which gave satisfaction in Ireland, you, yes you, who now fill the great offices of state, assumed the offensive. From obstruction you proceeded to aggression. You brought in a bill which you called a Bill for the Registration of Electors in Ireland. We then told you that it was a bill for the wholesale disfranchisement of the electors of Ireland. We then proved incontrovertibly that, under pretence of reforming the law of procedure, you were really altering the substantive law; that, by making it impossible for any man to vindicate his right to vote without trouble, expense, and loss of time, you were really taking away the votes of tens of thousands. You denied all this then. You very coolly admit it all now. Am I to believe that you did know it as well in 1841 as in 1844? Has one new fact been brought to light? Has one argument been discovered which was not, three or four years ago, urged twenty, thirty, forty times in this House? Why is it that you have, when in power, abstained from proposing that change in the mode of registration which, when you were out of power, you represented as indispensable? You excuse yourselves by saying that now the responsibilities of office are upon you. In plain words, your trick has served its purpose. Your object,—for I will do justice to your patriotism,—your object was not to ruin your country, but to get in; and you are in. Such public virtue deserved such a reward, a reward which has turned out a punishment, a reward which ought to be, while the world lasts, a warning to unscrupulous ambition. Many causes contributed to place you in your present situation. But the chief cause was, beyond all doubt, the prejudice which you excited amongst the English against the just and humane manner in which the late Ministers governed Ireland. In your impatience for office, you called up the devil of religious intolerance, a devil more easily evoked than dismissed. He did your work; and he holds your bond. You once found him an useful slave: but you have since found him a hard master. It was pleasant, no doubt, to be applauded by high churchmen and low churchmen, by the Sheldonian Theatre and by Exeter Hall. It was pleasant to be described as the champions of the Protestant faith, as the men who stood up for the Gospel against that spurious liberality which made no distinction between truth and falsehood. It was pleasant to hear your opponents called by every nickname that is to be found in the foul vocabulary of the Reverend Hugh Macneill. It was pleasant to hear that they were the allies of Antichrist, that they were the servants of the man of sin, that they were branded with the mark of the Beast. But when all this slander and scurrility had raised you to power, when you found that you had to manage millions of those who had been, year after year, constantly insulted and defamed by yourselves and your lacqueys, your hearts began to fail you. Now you tell us that you have none but kind and respectful feelings towards the Irish Roman Catholics, that you wish to conciliate them, that you wish to carry the Emancipation Act into full effect, that nothing would give you more pleasure than to place on the bench of justice a Roman Catholic lawyer of conservative politics, that nothing would give you more pleasure than to place at the Board of Treasury, or at the Board of Admiralty, some Roman Catholic gentleman of conservative politics, distinguished by his talents for business or debate. Your only reason, you assure us, for not promoting Roman Catholics is that all the Roman Catholics are your enemies; and you ask whether any Minister can be expected to promote his enemies. For my part I do not doubt that you would willingly promote Roman Catholics: for, as I have said, I give you full credit for not wishing to do your country more harm than is necessary for the purpose of turning out and keeping out the Whigs. I also fully admit that you cannot be blamed for not promoting your enemies. But what I want to know is, how it happens that all the Roman Catholics in the United Kingdom are your enemies. Was such a thing ever heard of before? Here are six or seven millions of people of all professions, of all trades, of all grades of rank, fortune, intellect, education. Begin with the premier Peer, the Earl Marshal of the realm, the chief of the Howards, the heir of the Mowbrays and Fitzalans, and go down through earls, barons, baronets, lawyers, and merchants, to the very poorest peasant that eats his potatoes without salt in Mayo; and all these millions to a man are arrayed against the Government. How do you explain this? Is there any natural connection between the Roman Catholic theology and the political theories held by Whigs and by reformers more democratical than the Whigs? Not only is there no natural connection, but there is a natural opposition. Of all Christian sects the Roman Catholic Church holds highest the authority of antiquity, of tradition, of immemorial usage. Her spirit is eminently conservative, nay, in the opinion of all Protestants, conservative to an unreasonable and pernicious extent. A man who has been taught from childhood to regard with horror all innovation in religion is surely less likely than another man to be a bold innovator in politics. It is probable that a zealous Roman Catholic, if there were no disturbing cause, would be a Tory; and the Roman Catholics were all Tories till you persecuted them into Whiggism and Radicalism. In the civil war, how many Roman Catholics were there in Fairfax's army? I believe, not one. They were all under the banner of Charles the First. When a reward of five thousand pounds was offered for Charles the Second alive or dead, when to conceal him was to run a most serious risk of the gallows, it was among Roman Catholics that he found shelter. It has been the same in other countries. When everything else in France was prostrate before the Jacobins, the Roman Catholic peasantry of Brittany and Poitou still stood up for the House of Bourbon. Against the gigantic power of Napoleon, the Roman Catholic peasantry of the Tyrol maintained unaided the cause of the House of Hapsburg. It would be easy to multiply examples. And can we believe, in defiance of all reason and of all history, that, if the Roman Catholics of the United Kingdom had been tolerably well governed, they would not have been attached to the Government? In my opinion the Tories never committed so great an error as when they scourged away and spurned away the Roman Catholics. Mr Burke understood this well. The sentiment which, towards the close of his life, held the entire possession of his mind, was a horror,—a morbid horror it at last became,—of Jacobinism, and of everything that seemed to him to tend towards Jacobinism; and, like a great statesman and philosopher,—for such he was even in his errors,—he perceived, and he taught Mr Pitt to perceive, that, in the war against Jacobinism, the Roman Catholics were the natural allies of royalty and aristocracy. But the help of these allies was contumeliously rejected by those politicians who make themselves ridiculous by carousing on Mr Pitt's birthday, while they abjure all Mr Pitt's principles. The consequence is, as you are forced to own, that there is not in the whole kingdom a Roman Catholic of note who is your friend. Therefore, whatever your inclinations may be, you must intrust power in Ireland to Protestants, to Ultra-Protestants, to men who, whether they belong to Orange lodges or not, are in spirit Orangemen. Every appointment which you make increases the discontent of the Roman Catholics. The more discontented they are, the less you can venture to employ them. The way in which you treated them while you were in opposition has raised in them such a dislike and distrust of you that you cannot carry the Emancipation Act into effect, though, as you tell us, and as I believe, you sincerely desire to do so. As respects the offices of which you dispose, that Act is null and void. Of all the boons which that Act purports to bestow on Roman Catholics they really enjoy only one, admission to Parliament: and that they would not enjoy if you had been able three years ago to carry your Irish Registration Bill. You have wounded national feeling: you have wounded religious feeling: and the animosity which you have roused shows itself in a hundred ways, some of which I abhor, some of which I lament, but at none of which I can wonder. They are the natural effects of insult and injury on quick and ill regulated sensibility. You, for your own purposes, inflamed the public mind of England against Ireland; and you have no right to be surprised by finding that the public mind of Ireland is inflamed against England. You called a fourth part of the people of the United Kingdom aliens: and you must not blame them for feeling and acting like aliens. You have filled every public department with their enemies. What then could you expect but that they would set up against your Lord Lieutenant and your official hierarchy a more powerful chief and a more powerful organization of their own? They remember, and it would be strange indeed if they had forgotten, what under the same chief, and by a similar organization, they extorted from you in 1829; and they are determined to try whether you are bolder and more obstinate now than then.

Such are the difficulties of this crisis. To a great extent they are of your own making. And what have you done in order to get out of them? Great statesmen have sometimes committed great mistakes, and yet have by wisdom and firmness extricated themselves from the embarrassments which those mistakes had caused. Let us see whether you are entitled to rank among such statesmen. And first, what,—commanding, as you do, a great majority in this and in the other House of Parliament, —what have you done in the way of legislation? The answer is very short and simple. The beginning and end of all your legislation for Ireland will be found in the Arms Act of last session. You will hardly call that conciliation; and I shall not call it coercion. It was mere petty annoyance. It satisfied nobody. We called on you to redress the wrongs of Ireland. Many of your own friends called on you to stifle her complaints. One noble and learned person was so much disgusted by your remissness that he employed his own great abilities and his own valuable time in framing a new coercion bill for you. You were deaf alike to us and to him. The whole fruit of your legislative wisdom was this one paltry teasing police regulation.

Your executive administration through the whole recess has been one long blunder. The way in which your Lord Lieutenant and his advisers acted about the Clontarf meeting would alone justify a severe vote of censure. The noble lord, the Secretary for the Colonies,* has told us that the Government did all that was possible to caution the people against attending that meeting, and that it would be unreasonable to censure men for not performing impossibilities. Now, Sir, the ministers themselves acknowledge that, as early as the morning of the Friday which preceded the day fixed for the meeting, the Lord Lieutenant determined to put forth a proclamation against the meeting. Yet the proclamation was not published in Dublin and the suburbs till after nightfall on Saturday. The meeting was fixed for the Sunday morning. Will any person have the hardihood to assert that it was impossible to have a proclamation drawn up, printed and circulated, in twenty-four hours, nay in six hours? It is idle to talk of the necessity of weighing well the words of such a document. The Lord Lieutenant should have weighed well the value of the lives of his royal mistress's subjects. Had he done so, there can be no doubt that the proclamation might have been placarded on every wall in and near Dublin early in the forenoon of the Saturday. The negligence of the Government would probably have caused the loss of many lives but for the interposition of the man whom you are persecuting. Fortune stood your friend; and he stood your friend; and thus a slaughter more terrible than that which took place twenty-five years ago at Manchester was averted.

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* Lord Stanley.

But you were incorrigible. No sooner had you, by strange good luck, got safe out of one scrape, than you made haste to get into another, out of which, as far as I can see, you have no chance of escape. You instituted the most unwise, the most unfortunate of all state prosecutions. You seem not to have at all known what you were doing. It appears never to have occurred to you that there was any difference between a criminal proceeding which was certain to fix the attention of the whole civilised world and an ordinary *qui tam* action for a penalty. The evidence was such and the law such that you were likely to get a verdict and a judgment; and that was enough for you. Now, Sir, in such a case as this, the probability of getting the verdict and the judgment is only a part, and a very small part, of what a statesman ought to consider. Before you determined to bring the most able, the most powerful, the most popular of your opponents to the bar as a criminal, on account of the manner in which he had opposed you, you ought to have asked yourselves whether the decision which you expected to obtain from the tribunals would be ratified by the voice of your own country, of foreign countries, of posterity; whether the general opinion of mankind might not be that, though you were legally in the right, you were morally in the wrong. It was no common person that you were bent on punishing. About that person I feel, I own, considerable difficulty in saying anything. He is placed in a situation which would prevent generous enemies, which has prevented all the members of this House, with one ignominious exception, from assailing him acrimoniously. I will try, in speaking of him, to pay the respect due to eminence and to misfortune without violating the respect due to truth. I am convinced that the end which he is pursuing is not only mischievous but unattainable: and some of the means which he has stooped to use for the purpose of attaining that end I regard with deep disapprobation. But it is impossible for me not to see that the place which he holds in the estimation of his countrymen is such as no popular leader in our history, I might perhaps say in the history of the world, has ever attained. Nor is the interest which he inspires confined to Ireland or to the United Kingdom. Go where you will on the Continent: visit any coffee house: dine at any public table: embark on board of any steamboat: enter any diligence, any railway carriage: from the moment that your accent shows you to be an Englishman, the very first question asked by your companions, be they what they may, physicians, advocates, merchants, manufacturers, or what we should call yeomen, is certain to be "What will be done with Mr O'Connell?" Look over any file of French journals; and you will see what a space he occupies in the eyes of the French people. It is most unfortunate, but it is a truth, and a truth which we ought always to bear in mind, that there is among our neighbours a feeling about the connection between England and Ireland not very much unlike the feeling which exists here about the connection between Russia and Poland. All the sympathies of all continental politicians are with the Irish. We are regarded as the oppressors, and the Irish as the oppressed. An insurrection in Ireland would have the good wishes of a great majority of the people of Europe. And, Sir, it is natural that it should be so. For the cause of the Irish repealers has two different aspects, a democratic aspect, and a Roman Catholic aspect, and is therefore regarded with favour by foreigners of almost every shade of opinion. The extreme left,—to use the French nomenclature,—wishes success to a great popular movement against the throne and the aristocracy. The extreme right wishes success to a movement headed by the bishops and priests of the true Church against a heretical government and a heretical hierarchy. The consequence is that, in a contest with Ireland, you will not have, out of this island, a single well-wisher in the world. I do not say this in order to intimidate you. But I do say that, on an occasion on which all Christendom was watching your conduct with an unfriendly and suspicious eye, you should have carefully avoided everything that looked like foul play. Unhappily you were too much bent on gaining the victory ; and you have gained a victory more disgraceful and disastrous than any defeat. Mr O'Connell has been convicted : but you cannot deny that he has been wronged : you cannot deny that irregularities have been committed, or that the effect of those irregularities has been to put you in a better situation and him in a worse situation than the law contemplated. It is admitted that names which ought to have been in the jury-list were not there. It is admitted that all, or almost all, the names which were wrongfully excluded were the names of Roman Catholics. As to the number of those who were wrongfully excluded there is some dispute. An affidavit has been produced which puts the number at twenty-seven. The right honourable gentleman, the Recorder of Dublin, who of course puts the number as low as he conscientiously can, admits twenty-four. But some gentlemen maintain that this irregularity, though doubtless blamable, cannot have had any effect on the event of the trial. What, they ask, are twenty or twenty-seven names in seven hundred and twenty? Why, Sir, a very simple arithmetical calculation will show that the irregularity was of grave importance. Of the seven hundred and twenty, forty-eight were to be selected by lot, and then reduced by alternate striking to twelve. The forty-eighth part of seven hundred and twenty is fifteen. If, therefore, there had been fifteen more Roman Catholics in the jury-list, it would have been an even chance that there would have been one Roman Catholic more among the forty-eight. If there had been twenty-seven more Roman Catholics in the list, it would have been almost an even chance that there would have been two Roman Catholics more among the forty-eight. Is it impossible, is it improbable that, but for this trick or this blunder,—I will not now inquire which,—the result of the trial might have been different? For, remember the power which the law gives to a single juror. He can, if his mind is fully made up, prevent a conviction. I heard murmurs when I used the word trick. Am I not justified in feeling a doubt which it is quite evident that Mr Justice Perrin feels? He is reported to have said,—and I take the report of newspapers favourable to the Government,—he is reported to have said that there had been great carelessness, great neglect of duty, that there were circumstances which raised grave suspicion, and that he was not prepared to say that the irregularity was accidental. The noble lord the Secretary for the Colonies has admonished us to pay respect to the judges. I am sure that I pay the greatest respect to everything that falls from Mr Justice Perrin. He must know much better than I, much better than any English gentleman, what artifices are likely to be employed by Irish functionaries for the purpose of packing a jury; and he tells us that he is not satisfied that this irregularity was the effect of mere inadvertence. But, says the right honourable Baronet, the Secretary for the Home Department, "I am not responsible for this irregularity." Most true: and nobody holds the right honourable Baronet responsible for it. But he goes on to say, "I lament this irregularity most sincerely: for I believe that it has raised a prejudice against the administration of justice." Exactly so. That is just what I say. I say that a prejudice has been created against the adminstration of justice. I say that a taint of suspicion has been thrown on the verdict which you have obtained. And I ask whether it is right and decent in you to avail yourselves of a verdict on which such a taint has been thrown? The only wise, the only honourable course open to you was to say, "A mistake has been committed: that mistake has given us an unfair advantage; and of that advantage we will not make use." Unhappily, the time when you might have taken this course, and might thus to a great extent have repaired your former errors, has been suffered to elapse.

Well, you had forty-eight names taken by lot from this mutilated jury-list: and then came the striking. You struck out all the Roman Catholic names: and you give us your reasons for striking out these names, reasons which I do not think it worth while to examine. The real question which you should have considered was this: Can a great issue between two hostile religions,—for such the issue was,—be tried in a manner above all suspicion by a jury composed exclusively of men of one of those religions? I know that in striking out the Roman Catholics you did nothing that was not according to technical rules. But my great charge against you is that you have looked on this whole case in a technical point of view, that you have been attorneys when you should have been statesmen. The letter of the law was doubtless with you; but not the noble spirit of the law. The jury *de medietate linguæ* is of immemorial antiquity among us. Suppose that a Dutch sailor at Wapping is accused of stabbing an Englishman in a brawl. The fate of the culprit is decided by a mixed body, by six Englishmen and six Dutchmen. Such were the securities which the wisdom and justice of our ancestors gave to aliens. You are ready enough to call Mr O'Connell an alien when it serves your purposes to do so. You are ready enough to inflict on the Irish Roman Catholic all the evils of alienage. But the one privilege, the one advantage of alienage, you deny him. In a case which of all cases most require a jury *de medietate*, in a case which sprang out of the mutual hostility of races and sects, you pack a jury all of one race and all of one sect. Why, if you were determined to go on with this unhappy prosecution, not have a common jury? There was no difficulty in having such a jury; and among the jurors might have been some respectable Roman Catholics who were not members of the Repeal Association. A verdict of Not Guilty from such a jury would have done you infinitely less harm than the verdict of Guilty which you have succeeded in obtaining. Yes, you have obtained a verdict of Guilty; but you have obtained that verdict from twelve men brought together by illegal means, and selected in such a manner that their decision can inspire no confidence. You have obtained that verdict by the help of a Chief Justice of whose charge I can hardly trust myself to speak. To do him right, however, I will say that his charge was not, as it has been called, unprecedented; for it bears a very close resemblance to some charges which may be found in the state trials of the reign of Charles the Second. However, with this jury-list, with this jury, with this judge, you have a verdict. And what have you gained by it? Have you pacified Ireland? No doubt there is just at the present moment an apparent tranquillity; but it is a tranquillity more alarming than turbulence. The Irish will be quiet till you begin to put the sentence of imprisonment into execution, because, feeling the deepest interest in the fate of their persecuted Tribune, they will do nothing that can be prejudicial to him. But will they be quiet when the door of a gaol has been closed on him? Is it possible to believe that an agitator, whom they adored while his agitation was a source of profit to him, will lose his hold on their affections by being a martyr in what they consider as their cause? If I, who am strongly attached to the Union, who believe that the Repeal of the Union would be fatal to the empire, and who think Mr O'Connell's conduct highly reprehensible, cannot conscientiously say that he has had a fair trial, if the prosecutors themselves are forced to own that things have happened which have excited a prejudice against the verdict and the judgment, what must be the feelings of the people of Ireland, who believe not merely that he is guiltless, but that he is the best friend that they ever had? He will no longer be able to harangue them: but his wrongs will stir their blood more than his eloquence ever did; nor will he in confinement be able to exercise that influence which has so often restrained them, even in their most excited mood, from proceeding to acts of violence.

Turn where we will, the prospect is gloomy; and that which of all things most disturbs me is this, that your experience, sharp as it has been, does not seem to have made you wiser. All that I have been able to collect from your declarations leads me to apprehend that, while you continue to hold power, the future will be of a piece with the past. As to your executive administration, you hold out no hope that it will be other than it has been. If we look back, your only remedies for the disorders of Ireland have been an impolitic state prosecution, an unfair state trial, barracks and soldiers. If we look forward, you promise us no remedies but an unjust sentence, the harsh execution of that sentence, more barracks and more soldiers.

You do indeed try to hold out hopes of one or two legislative reforms beneficial to Ireland; but these hopes, I am afraid, will prove delusive. You hint that you have prepared a Registration bill, of which the effect will be to extend the elective franchise. What the provisions of that bill may be we do not know. But this we know, that the matter is one about which it is utterly impossible for you to do anything that shall be at once honourable to yourselves and useful to the country. Before we see your plan, we can say with perfect confidence that it must either destroy the last remnant of the representative system in Ireland, or the last remnant of your own character for consistency.

About the much agitated question of land tenure you acknowledge that you have at present nothing to propose. We are to have a report, but you cannot tell us when.

The Irish Church, as at present constituted and endowed, you are fully determined to uphold. On some future occasion, I hope to be able to explain at large my views on that subject. To-night I have exhausted my own strength, and I have exhausted also, I am afraid, the kind indulgence of the House. I will therefore only advert very briefly to some things which have been said about the Church in the course of the present debate.

Several gentlemen opposite have spoken of the religious discord which is the curse of Ireland in language which does them honour; and I am only sorry that we are not to have their votes as well as their speeches. But from the Treasury bench we have heard nothing but this, that the Established Church is there, and that there it must and shall remain. As to the speech of the noble lord the Secretary for the Colonies, really when we hear such a pitiable defence of a great institution from a man of such eminent abilities, what inference can we draw but that the institution is altogether indefensible? The noble lord tells us that the Roman Catholics, in 1757, when they were asking to be relieved from the penal laws, and in 1792, when they were asking to be relieved from civil disabilities, professed to be quite willing that the Established Church should retain its endowments. What is it to us, Sir, whether they did or not? If you can prove this Church to be a good institution, of course it ought to be maintained. But do you mean to say that a bad institution ought to be maintained because some people who have been many years in their graves said that they did not complain of it? What if the Roman Catholics of the present generation hold a different language on this subject from the Roman Catholics of the last generation? Is this inconsistency, which appears to shock the noble lord, anything but the natural and inevitable progress of all reform? People who are oppressed, and who have no hope of obtaining entire justice, beg to be relieved from the most galling part of what they suffer. They assure the oppressor that if he will only relax a little of his severity they shall be quite content; and perhaps, at the time, they believe that they shall be content. But are expressions of this sort, are mere supplications uttered under duress, to estop every person who utters them, and all his posterity to the end of time, from asking for entire justice? Am I debarred from trying to recover property of which I have been robbed, because, when the robber's pistol was at my breast, I begged him to take everything that I had and to spare my life? The noble lord knows well that, while the slave trade existed, the great men who exerted themselves to put an end to that trade disclaimed all thought of emancipating the negroes. In those days, Mr Pitt, Mr Fox, Lord Grenville, Lord Grey, and even my dear and honoured friend of whom I can never speak without emotion, Mr Wilberforce, always said that it was a calumny to accuse them of intending to liberate the black population of the sugar islands. In 1807 the present Duke of Northumberland, then Lord Percy, in the generous enthusiasm of youth, rose to propose in this House the abolition of slavery. Mr Wilberforce interposed, nay, I believe, almost pulled Lord Percy down. Nevertheless in 1833 the noble lord the Secretary for the Colonies brought in a bill to abolish slavery. Suppose that when he resumed his seat, after making that most eloquent speech in which he explained his plan to us, some West Indian planter had risen, and had said that in 1792, in 1796, in 1807, all the leading philanthropists had solemnly declared that they had no intention of emancipating the negroes; would not the noble lord have answered that nothing that had been said by anybody in 1792 or 1807 could bind us not to do what was right in 1833?

This is not the only point on which the noble lord's speech is quite at variance with his own conduct. He appeals to the fifth article of the Treaty of Union. He says that, if we touch the revenues and privileges of the Established Church, we shall violate that article; and to violate an article of the Treaty of Union is, it seems, a breach of public faith of which he cannot bear to think. But, Sir, why is the fifth article to be held more sacred than the fourth, which fixes the number of Irish members who are to sit in this House? The fourth article, we all know, has been altered. And who brought in the bill which altered that article? The noble lord himself.

Then the noble lord adverts to the oath taken by Roman Catholic members of this House. They bind themselves, he says, not to use their power for the purpose of injuring the Established Church. I am sorry that the noble lord is not at this moment in the House. Had he been here I should have made some remarks which I now refrain from making on one or two expressions which fell from him. But, Sir, let us allow to his argument all the weight which he can himself claim for it. What does it prove? Not that the Established Church of Ireland is a good institution; not that it ought to be maintained; but merely this, that, when we are about to divide on the question whether it shall be maintained, the Roman Catholic members ought to walk away to the library. The oath which they have taken is nothing to me and to the other Protestant members who have not taken it. Suppose then our Roman Catholic friends withdrawn. Suppose that we, the six hundred and twenty or thirty Protestant members remain in the House. Then there is an end of this argument about the oath. Will the noble lord then be able to give us any reason for maintaining the Church of Ireland on the present footing?

I hope, Sir, that the right honourable Baronet the first Lord of the Treasury will not deal with this subject as his colleagues have dealt with it. We have a right to expect that a man of his capacity, placed at the head of government, will attempt to defend the Irish Church in a manly and rational way. I would beg him to consider these questions:—For what ends do Established Churches exist? Does the Established Church of Ireland accomplish those ends or any one of those ends? Can an Established Church which has no hold on the hearts of the body of the people be otherwise than useless, or worse than useless? Has the Established Church of Ireland any hold on the hearts of the body of the people? Has it been successful in making proselytes? Has it been what the Established Church of England has been with justice called, what the Established Church of Scotland was once with at least equal justice called, the poor man's Church? Has it trained the great body of the people to virtue, consoled them in affliction, commanded their reverence, attached them to itself and to the State? Show that these questions can be answered in the affirmative; and you will have made, what I am sure has never yet been made, a good defence of the Established Church of Ireland. But it is mere mockery to bring us quotations from forgotten speeches, and from mouldy petitions presented to George the Second at a time when the penal laws were still in full force.

And now, Sir, I must stop. I have said enough to justify the vote which I shall give in favour of the motion of my noble friend. I have shown, unless I deceive myself, that the extraordinary disorders which now alarm us in Ireland have been produced by the fatal policy of the Government. I have shown that the mode in which the Government is now dealing with those disorders is far more likely to inflame than to allay them. While this system lasts, Ireland can never be tranquil; and till Ireland is tranquil, England can never hold her proper place among the nations of the world. To the dignity, to the strength, to the safety of this great country, internal peace is indispensably necessary. In every negotiation, whether with France on the right of search, or with America on the line of boundary, the fact that Ireland is discontented is uppermost in the minds of the diplomatists on both sides, making the representative of the British Crown timorous, and making his adversary bold. And no wonder. This is indeed a great and splendid empire, well provided with the means both of annoyance and of defence. England can do many things which are beyond the power of any other nation in the world. She has dictated peace to China. She rules Caffraria and Australasia. She could again sweep from the ocean all commerce but her own. She could again blockade every port from the Baltic to the Adriatic. She is able to guard her vast Indian dominions against all hostility by land or sea. But in this gigantic body there is one vulnerable spot near to the heart. At that spot forty-six years ago a blow was aimed which narrowly missed, and which, if it had not missed, might have been deadly. The government and the legislature, each in its own sphere, is deeply responsible for the continuance of a state of things which is fraught with danger to the State. From my share of that responsibility I shall clear myself by the vote which I am about to give; and I trust that the number and the respectability of those in whose company I shall go into the lobby will be such as to convince the Roman Catholics of Ireland that they need not yet relinquish all hope of obtaining relief from the wisdom and justice of an Imperial Parliament.

A SPEECH

DELIVERED IN THE HOUSE OF COMMONS ON THE 6TH OF JUNE 1844.

An attempt having been made to deprive certain dissenting congregations of property which they had long enjoyed, on the ground that they did not hold the same religious opinions that had been held by the purchasers from whom they derived their title to that property, the Government of Sir Robert Peel brought in a bill fixing a time of limitation in such cases. The time fixed was twenty-five years.

The bill, having passed the Lords, came down to the House of Commons. On the sixth of June 1844, the second reading was moved by the Attorney General, Sir William Follett. Sir Robert Inglis, Member for the University of Oxford, moved that the bill should be read a second time that day six months; and the amendment was seconded by Mr Plumptre, Member for Kent. Early in the debate the following Speech was made.

The second reading was carried by 307 votes to 117.

IF, Sir, I should unhappily fail in preserving that tone in which the question before us ought to be debated, it will assuredly not be for want either of an example or of a warning. The honourable and learned Member who moved the second reading has furnished me with a model which I cannot too closely imitate; and from the honourable Member for Kent, if I can learn nothing else, I may at least learn what temper and what style I ought most carefully to avoid.

I was very desirous, Sir, to catch your eye, not because I was so presumptuous as to hope that I should be able to add much to the powerful and luminous argument of the honourable and learned gentleman who has, to our great joy, again appeared among us to-night; but because I thought it desirable that, at an early period in the debate, some person whose seat is on this side of the House, some person strongly opposed to the policy of the present Government, should say, what I now say with all my heart, that this is a bill highly honourable to the Government, a bill framed on the soundest principles, and evidently introduced from the best and purest motives. This praise is a tribute due to Her Majesty's Ministers; and I have great pleasure in paying it.

I have great pleasure also in bearing my testimony to the humanity, the moderation, and the decorum with which my honourable friend the Member for the University of Oxford has expressed his sentiments. I must particularly applaud the resolution which he announced, and to which he strictly adhered, of treating this question as a question of *meum* and *tuum*, and not as a question of orthodoxy and heterodoxy. With him it is possible to reason. But how am I to reason with the honourable Member for Kent, who has made a speech without one fact, one argument, one shadow of an argument, a speech made up of nothing but vituperation? I grieve to say that the same bitterness of theological animosity which characterised that speech may be discerned in too many of the petitions with which, as he boasts, our table has been heaped day after day. The honourable Member complains that those petitions have not been treated with proper respect. Sir, they have been treated with much more respect than they deserved. He asks why we are to suppose that the petitioners are not competent to form a judgment on this question? My answer is, that they have certified their incompetence under their own hands. They have, with scarcely once exception, treated this question as a question of divinity, though it is purely a question of property: and when I see men treat a question of property as if it were a question of divinity, I am certain that, however numerous they may be, their opinion is entitled to no consideration. If the persons whom this bill is meant to relieve are orthodox, that is no reason for our plundering anybody else in order to enrich them. If they are heretics, that is no reason for our plundering them in order to enrich others. I should not think myself justified in supporting this bill, if I could not with truth declare that, whatever sect had been in possession of these chapels, my conduct would have been precisely the same. I have no peculiar sympathy with Unitarians. If these people, instead of being Unitarians, had been Roman Catholics, or Wesleyan Methodists, or General Baptists, or Particular Baptists, or members of the Old Secession Church of Scotland, or members of the Free Church of Scotland, I should speak as I now speak, and vote as I now mean to vote.

Sir, the whole dispute is about the second clause of this bill. I can hardly conceive that any gentleman will vote against the bill on account of the error in the marginal note on the third clause. To the first clause my honourable friend the Member for the University of Oxford said, if I understood him rightly, that he had no objection; and indeed a man of his integrity and benevolence could hardly say less after listening to the lucid and powerful argument of the Attorney General. It is therefore on the second clause that the whole question turns.

The second clause, Sir, rests on a principle simple, well known, and most important to the welfare of all classes of the community. That principle is this, that prescription is a good title to property, that there ought to be a time of limitation, after which a possessor, in whatever way his possession may have originated, must not be dispossessed. Till very lately, Sir, I could not have imagined that, in any assembly of reasonable, of civilised, of educated men, it could be necessary for me to stand up in defence of that principle. I should have thought it as much a waste of the public time to make a speech on such a subject as to make a speech against burning witches, against trying writs of right by wager of battle, or against requiring a culprit to prove his innocence by walking over red-hot ploughshares. But I find that I was in error. Certain sages, lately assembled in conclave at Exeter Hall, have done me the honour to communicate to me the fruits of their profound meditations on the science of legislation. They have, it seems, passed a resolution declaring that the principle, which I had supposed that no man out of Bedlam would ever question, is an untenable principle, and altogether unworthy of a British Parliament. They have been pleased to add, that the present Government cannot, without gross inconsistency, call on Parliament to pass a statute of limitation. And why? Will the House believe it? Because the present Government has appointed two new Vice Chancellors.

Really, Sir, I do not know whether the opponents of this bill shine more as logicians or as jurists. Standing here as the advocate of prescription, I ought not to forget that prescriptive right of talking nonsense which gentlemen who stand on the platform of Exeter Hall are undoubtedly entitled to claim. But, though I recognise the right, I cannot but think that it may be abused, and that it has been abused on the present occasion. One thing at least is clear, that, if Exeter Hall be in the right, all the masters of political philosophy, all the great legislators, all the systems of law by which men are and have been governed in all civilised countries, from the earliest times, must be in the wrong. How indeed can any society prosper, or even exist, without the aid of this untenable principle, this principle unworthy of a British legislature? This principle was found in the Athenian law. This principle was found in the Roman law. This principle was found in the laws of all those nations of which the jurisprudence was derived from Rome. This principle was found in the law administered by the Parliament of Paris; and, when that Parliament and the law which it administered had been swept away by the revolution, this principle reappeared in the Code Napoleon. Go westward, and you find this principle recognised beyond the Mississippi. Go eastward, and you find it recognised beyond the Indus, in countries which never heard the name of Justinian, in countries to which no translation of the Pandects ever found its way. Look into our own laws, and you will see that the principle, which is now designated as unworthy of Parliament, has guided Parliament ever since Parliament existed. Our first statute of limitation was enacted at Merton, by men some of whom had borne a part in extorting the Great Charter and the Forest Charter from King John. From that time to this it has been the study of a succession of great lawyers and statesmen to make the limitation more and more stringent. The Crown and the Church indeed were long exempted from the general rule. But experience fully proved that every such exemption was an evil; and a remedy was at last applied. Sir George Savile, the model of English country gentlemen, was the author of the Act which barred the claims of the Crown. That eminent magistrate, the late Lord Tenterden, was the author of the Act which barred the claims of the Church. Now, Sir, how is it possible to believe that the Barons, whose seals are upon our Great Charter, would have perfectly agreed with the great jurists who framed the Code of Justinian, with the great jurists who framed the Code of Napoleon, with the most learned English lawyers of the nineteenth century, and with the Pundits of Benares, unless there had been some strong and clear reason which necessarily led men of sense in every age and country to the same conclusion? Nor is it difficult to see what the reason was. For it is evident that the principle which silly and ignorant fanatics have called untenable is essential to the institution of property, and that, if you take away that principle, you will produce evils resembling those which would be produced by a general confiscation. Imagine what would follow if the maxims of Exeter Hall were introduced into Westminster Hall. Imagine a state of things in which one of us should be liable to be sued on a bill of exchange indorsed by his grandfather in 1760. Imagine a man possessed of an estate and manor house which had descended to him through ten or twelve generations of ancestors, and yet liable to be ejected because some flaw had been detected in a deed executed three hundred years ago, in the reign of Henry the Eighth. Why, Sir, should we not all cry out that it would be better to live under the rule of a Turkish Pasha than under such a system. Is it not plain that the enforcing of an obsolete right is the inflicting of a wrong? Is it not plain that, but for our statutes of limitation, a lawsuit would be merely a grave, methodical robbery? I am ashamed to argue a point so clear.

And if this be the general rule, why should the case which we are now considering be an exception to that rule? I have done my best to understand why. I have read much bad oratory, and many foolish petitions. I have heard with attention the reasons of my honourable friend the Member for the University of Oxford; and I should have heard the reasons of the honourable Member for Kent, if there had been any to hear. Every argument by which my honourable friend the Member for the University of Oxford tried to convince us that this case is an exception to the general rule, will be found on examination to be an argument against the general rule itself. He says that the possession which we propose to sanction was originally a wrongful possession. Why, Sir, all the statutes of limitation that ever were made sanction possession which was originally wrongful. It is for the protection of possessors who are not in condition to prove that their possession was originally rightful that statutes of limitation are passed. Then my honourable friend says that this is an *ex post facto* law. Why, Sir, so are all our great statutes of limitation. Look at the Statute of Merton, passed in 1235; at the Statute of Westminster, passed in 1275; at the Statute of James the First, passed in 1623; at Sir George Savile's Act, passed in the last century; at Lord Tenterden's Act, passed in our own time. Every one of those Acts was retrospective. Every one of them barred claims arising out of past transactions. Nor was any objection ever raised to what was so evidently just and wise, till bigotry and chicanery formed that disgraceful league against which we are now contending. But, it is said, it is unreasonable to grant a boon to men because they have been many years doing wrong. The length of the time during which they have enjoyed property not rightfully their own, is an aggravation of the injury which they have committed, and is so far from being a reason for letting them enjoy that property for ever, that it is rather a reason for compelling them to make prompt restitution. With this childish sophistry the petitions on our table are filled. Is it possible that any man can be so dull as not to perceive that, if this be a reason, it is a reason against all our statutes of limitation? I do a greater wrong to my tailor if I withhold payment of his bill during six years than if I withhold payment only during two years. Yet the law says that at the end of two years he may bring an action and force me to pay him with interest, but that after the lapse of six years he cannot force me to pay him at all. It is much harder that a family should be kept out of its hereditary estate during five generations than during five days. But if you are kept out of your estate five days you have your action of ejectment; and, after the lapse of five generations, you have no remedy. I say, therefore, with confidence, that every argument which has been urged against this bill is an argument against the great principle of prescription. I go further, and I say that, if there be any case which, in an especial manner, calls for the application of the principle of prescription, this is that case. For the Unitarian congregations have laid out so much on these little spots of ground that it is impossible to take the soil from them without taking from them property which is of much greater value than the mere soil, and which is indisputably their own. This is not the case of a possessor who has been, during many years, receiving great emoluments from land to which he had not a good title. It is the case of a possessor who has, from resources which were undoubtedly his own, expended on the land much more than it was originally worth. Even in the former case, it has been the policy of all wise lawgivers to fix a time of limitation. *A fortiori*, therefore, there ought to be a time of limitation in the latter case.

And here, Sir, I cannot help asking gentlemen to compare the petitions for this bill with the petitions against it. Never was there such a contrast. The petitions against the bill are filled with cant, rant, scolding, scraps of bad sermons. The petitions in favour of the bill set forth in the simplest manner great practical grievances. Take, for instance, the case of Cirencester. The meeting house there was built in 1730. It is certain that the Unitarian doctrines were taught there as early as 1742. That was only twelve years after the chapel had been founded. Many of the original subscribers must have been living. Many of the present congregation are lineal descendants of the original subscribers. Large sums have from time to time been laid out in repairing, enlarging, and embellishing the edifice ; and yet there are people who think it just and reasonable that this congregation should, after the lapse of more than a century, be turned out. At Norwich, again, a great dissenting meeting house was opened in 1688. It is not easy to say how soon Anti-Trinitarian doctrines were taught there. The change of sentiment in the congregation seems to have been gradual : but it is quite certain that, in 1754, ninety years ago, both pastor and flock were decidedly Unitarian. Round the chapel is a cemetery filled with the monuments of eminent Unitarians. Attached to the chapel are a schoolhouse and a library, built and fitted up by Unitarians. And now the occupants find that their title is disputed. They cannot venture to build ; they cannot venture to repair ; and they are anxiously awaiting our decision. I do not know that I have cited the strongest cases. I am giving you the ordinary history of these edifices. Go to Manchester. Unitarianism has been taught there at least seventy years in a chapel on which the Unitarians have expended large sums. Go to Leeds. Four thousand pounds have been subscribed for the repairing of the Unitarian chapel there, the chapel where, near eighty years ago, Priestley, the great Doctor of the sect, officiated. But these four thousand pounds are lying idle. Not a pew can be repaired till it is known whether this bill will become law. Go to Maidstone. There Unitarian doctrines have been taught during at least seventy years ; and seven hundred pounds have recently been laid out by the congregation in repairing the chapel. Go to Exeter. It matters not where you go. But go to Exeter. There Unitarian doctrines have been preached more than eighty years ; and two thousand pounds have been laid out on the chapel. It is the same at Coventry, at Bath, at Yarmouth, everywhere. And will a British Parliament rob the possessors of these buildings? I can use no other word. How should we feel if it were proposed to deprive any other class of men of land held during so long a time, and improved at so large a cost? And, if this property should be transferred to those who covet it, what would they gain in comparison with what the present occupants would lose? The pulpit of Priestley, the pulpit of Lardner, are objects of reverence to congregations which hold the tenets of Priestley and Lardner. To the intruders those pulpits will be nothing; nay, worse than nothing; memorials of heresiarchs. Within these chapels and all around them are the tablets which the pious affection of four generations has placed over the remains of dear mothers and sisters, wives and daughters, of eloquent preachers, of learned theological writers. To the Unitarian, the building which contains these memorials is a hallowed building. To the intruder it is of no more value than any other room in which he can find a bench to sit on and a roof to cover him. If, therefore, we throw out this bill, we do not merely rob one set of people in order to make a present to another set. That would be bad enough. But we rob the Unitarians of that which they regard as a most precious treasure; of that which is endeared to them by the strongest religious and the strongest domestic associations; of that which cannot be wrenched from them without inflicting on them the bitterest pain and humiliation. To the Trinitarians we give that which can to them be of little or no value except as a trophy of a most inglorious victory won in a most unjust war.

But, Sir, an imputation of fraud has been thrown on the Unitarians; not, indeed, here, but in many other places, and in one place of which I would always wish to speak with respect. The Unitarians, it has been said, knew that the original founders of these chapels were Trinitarians; and to use, for the purpose of propagating Unitarian doctrine, a building erected for the purpose of propagating Trinitarian doctrine was grossly dishonest. One very eminent person * has gone so far as to maintain that the Unitarians cannot pretend to any prescription of more than sixty-three years; and he proves his point thus:—Till the year 1779, he says, no dissenting teacher was within the protection of the Toleration Act unless he subscribed those articles of the Church of England which affirm the Athanasian doctrine. It is evident that no honest Unitarian can subscribe those articles. The inference is, that the persons who preached in these chapels down to the year 1779 must have been either Trinitarians or rogues. Now, Sir, I believe that they were neither Trinitarians nor rogues; and I cannot help suspecting that the great prelate who brought this charge against them is not so well read in the history of the nonconformist sects as in the history of that Church of which he is an ornament. The truth is that, long before the year 1779, the clause of the Toleration Act which required dissenting ministers to subscribe thirty-five or thirty-six of our thirty-nine articles had almost become obsolete. Indeed, that clause had never been rigidly enforced. From the very first there were some dissenting ministers who refused to subscribe, and yet continued to preach. Calany was one; and he was not molested. And if this could be done in the year in which the Toleration Act passed, we may easily believe that, at a later period, the law would not have been very strictly observed. New brooms, as the vulgar proverb tells us, sweep clean; and no statute is so rigidly enforced as a statute just made. But, Sir, so long ago as the year 1711, the provisions of the Toleration Act on this subject were modified. In that year the Whigs, in order to humour Lord Nottingham, with whom they had coalesced against Lord Oxford, consented to let the Occasional Conformity Bill

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* The Bishop of London.

pass; but they insisted on inserting in the bill a clause which was meant to propitiate the dissenters. By this clause it was enacted that, if an information were laid against a dissenting minister for having omitted to subscribe the articles, the defendant might, by subscribing at any stage of the proceedings anterior to the judgment, defeat the information, and throw all the costs on the informer. The House will easily believe that, when such was the state of the law, informers were not numerous. Indeed, during the discussions of 1773, it was distinctly affirmed, both in Parliament and in manifestoes put forth by the dissenting body, that the majority of nonconformist ministers then living had never subscribed. All arguments, therefore, grounded on the insincerity which has been rashly imputed to the Unitarians of former generations, fall at once to the ground.

But, it is said, the persons who, in the reigns of James the Second, of William the Third, and of Anne, first established these chapels, held the doctrine of the Trinity; and therefore, when, at a later period, the preachers and congregations departed from the doctrine of the Trinity, they ought to have departed from the chapels too. The honourable and learned gentleman, the Attorney General, has refuted this argument so ably that he has scarcely left anything for me to say about it. It is well known that the change which, soon after the Revolution, began to take place in the opinions of a section of the old Puritan body, was a gradual, an almost imperceptible, change. The principle of the English Presbyterians was to have no confession of faith and no form of prayer. Their trust deeds contained no accurate theological definitions. Nonsubscription was in truth the very bond which held them together. What, then, could be more natural than that, Sunday by Sunday, the sermons should have become less and less like those of the old Calvinistic divines, that the doctrine of the Trinity should have been less and less frequently mentioned, that at last it should have ceased to be mentioned, and that thus, in the course of years, preachers and hearers should, by insensible degrees, have become first Arians, then, perhaps, Socinians. I know that this explanation has been treated with disdain by people profoundly ignorant of the history of English nonconformity. I see that my right honourable friend near me* does not assent to it. Will he permit me to refer him to an analogous case with which he cannot but be well acquainted? No person in the House is more versed than he in the ecclesiastical history of Scotland; and he will, I am sure, admit that some of the doctrines now professed by the Scotch sects which sprang from the secessions of 1733 and 1760 are such as the seceders of 1733 and the seceders of 1760 would have regarded with horror. I have talked with some of the ablest, most learned, and most pious of the Scotch dissenters of our time; and they all fully admitted that they held more than one opinion which their predecessors would have considered as impious. Take the question of the connection between Church and State. The seceders of 1733 thought that the connection ought to be much closer than it is. They blamed the legislature for tolerating heresy. They maintained that the Solemn League and Covenant was still binding on the kingdom. They considered it as a national sin that the validity of the Solemn League and Covenant was not recognised at the time of the Revolution. When George Whitfield went to Scotland, though they approved of his Calvinistic opinions, and though they justly admired that natural eloquence which he possessed in so wonderful a degree, they would hold no communion with him because he would not subscribe the Solemn League and Covenant. Is that the doctrine of their successors? Are the Scotch dissenters now averse to toleration? Are they not zealous for the voluntary system? Is it not their constant cry that it is not the business of the civil magistrate to encourage any religion, false or true? Does any Bishop now abhor the Solemn League and Covenant more than they? Here is an instance in which numerous congregations have, retaining their identity, passed gradually from one opinion to another opinion. And would it be just, would it be decent in me, to impute dishonesty to them on that account? My right honourable friend may be of opinion that the question touching the connection between the Church and State is not a vital question. But was that the opinion of the divines who drew up the Secession Testimony? He well knows that in their view a man who denied that it was the duty of the government to defend religious truth with the civil sword was as much a heretic as a man who denied the doctrine of the Trinity.

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* Mr Fox Maule.

Again, Sir, take the case of the Wesleyan Methodists. They are zealous against this bill. They think it monstrous that a chapel originally built for people holding one set of doctrines should be occupied by people holding a different set of doctrines. I would advise them to consider whether they cannot find in the history of their own body reasons for being a little more indulgent. What were the opinions of that great and good man, their founder, on the question whether men not episcopally ordained could lawfully administer the Eucharist? He told his followers that lay administration was a sin which he never could tolerate. Those were the very words which he used; and I believe that, during his lifetime, the Eucharist never was administered by laymen in any place of worship which was under his control. After his death, however, the feeling in favour of lay administration became strong and general among his disciples. The Conference yielded to that feeling. The consequence is that now, in every chapel which belonged to Wesley, those who glory in the name of Wesleyans commit, every Sacrament Sunday, what Wesley declared to be a sin which he would never tolerate. And yet these very persons are not ashamed to tell us in loud and angry tones that it is fraud, downright fraud, in a congregation which has departed from its original doctrines to retain its original endowments. I believe, Sir, that, if you refuse to pass this bill, the Courts of Law will soon have to decide some knotty questions which, as yet, the Methodists little dream of.

It has, I own, given me great pain to observe the unfair and acrimonious manner in which too many of the Protestant nonconformists have opposed this bill. The opposition of the Established Church has been comparatively mild and moderate; and yet from the Established Church we had less right to expect mildness and moderation. It is certainly not right, but it is very natural, that a church, ancient and richly endowed, closely connected with the Crown and the aristocracy, powerful in parliament, dominant in the universities, should sometimes forget what is due to poorer and humbler Christian societies. But when I hear a cry for what is nothing less than persecution set up by men who have been, over and over again within my own memory, forced to invoke in their own defence the principles of toleration, I cannot but feel astonishment mingled with indignation. And what above all excites both my astonishment and my indignation is this, that the most noisy among the noisy opponents of the bill which we are considering are some sectaries who are at this very moment calling on us to pass another bill of just the same kind for their own benefit. I speak of those Irish Presbyterians who are asking for an *ex post facto* law to confirm their marriages. See how exact the parallel is between the case of those marriages and the case of these chapels. The Irish Presbyterians have gone on marrying according to their own forms during a long course of years. The Unitarians have gone on occupying, improving, embellishing certain property during a long course of years. In neither case did any doubt as to the right arise in the most honest, in the most scrupulous mind. At length, about the same time, both the validity of the Presbyterian marriages and the validity of the title by which the Unitarians held their chapels were disputed. The two questions came before the tribunals. The tribunals, with great reluctance, with great pain, pronounced that, neither in the case of the marriages nor in the case of the chapels, can prescription be set up against the letter of the law. In both cases there is a just claim to relief such as the legislature alone can afford. In both the legislature is willing to grant that relief. But this will not satisfy the orthodox Presbyterian. He demands with equal vehemence two things, that he shall be relieved, and that nobody else shall be relieved. In the same breath he tells us that it would be most iniquitous not to pass a retrospective law for his benefit, and that it would be most iniquitous to pass a retrospective law for the benefit of his fellow sufferers. I never was more amused than by reading, the other day, a speech made by a person of great note among the Irish Presbyterians on the subject of these marriages. "Is it to be endured," he says, "that the mummies of old and forgotten laws are to be dug up and unswathed for the annoyance of dissenters?" And yet a few hours later, this eloquent orator is himself hard at work in digging up and unswathing another set of mummies for the annoyance of another set of dissenters. I should like to know how he and such as he would look if we Churchmen were to assume the same tone towards them which they think it becoming to assume towards the Unitarian body; if we were to say, "You and those whom you would oppress are alike out of our pale. If they are heretics in your opinion, you are schismatics in ours. Since you insist on the letter of the law against them, we will insist on the letter of the law against you. You object to *ex post facto* statutes; and you shall have none. You think it reasonable that men should, in spite of a prescription of eighty or ninety years, be turned out of a chapel built with their own money, and a cemetery where their own kindred lie, because the original title was not strictly legal. We think it equally reasonable that those contracts which you have imagined to be marriages, but which are now adjudged not to be legal marriages, should be treated as nullities." I wish from my soul that some of these orthodox dissenters would recollect that the doctrine which they defend with so much zeal against the Unitarians is not the whole sum and substance of Christianity, and that there is a text about doing unto others as you would that they should do unto you.

To any intelligent man who has no object except to do justice, the Trinitarian dissenter and the Unitarian dissenter who are now asking us for relief will appear to have exactly the same right to it. There is, however, I must own, one distinction between the two cases. The Trinitarian dissenters are a strong body, and especially strong among the electors of towns. They are of great weight in the State. Some of us may probably, by voting to-night against their wishes, endanger our seats in this House. The Unitarians, on the other hand, are few in number. Their creed is unpopular. Their friendship is likely to injure a public man more than their enmity. If therefore there be among us any person of a nature at once tyrannical and cowardly, any person who delights in persecution, but is restrained by fear from persecuting powerful sects, now is his time. He never can have a better opportunity of gratifying his malevolence without risk of retribution. But, for my part, I long ago espoused the cause of religious liberty, not because that cause was popular, but because it was just; and I am not disposed to abandon the principles to which I have been true through my whole life in deference to a passing clamour. The day may come, and may come soon, when those who are now loudest in raising that clamour may again be, as they have formerly been, suppliants for justice. When that day comes I will try to prevent others from oppressing them, as I now try to prevent them from oppressing others. In the meantime I shall contend against their intolerance with the same spirit with which I may hereafter have to contend for their rights.

A SPEECH

DELIVERED IN THE HOUSE OF COMMONS ON THE 26TH OF FEBRUARY, 1845.

On the twenty-sixth of February, 1845, on the question that the order of the day for going into Committee of Ways and Means should be read, Lord John Russell moved the following amendment:—"That it is the opinion of this House that the plan proposed by Her Majesty's Government, in reference to the Sugar Duties, professes to keep up a distinction between foreign free labour sugar and foreign slave labour sugar, which is impracticable and illusory; and, without adequate benefit to the consumer, tends so greatly to impair the revenue as to render the removal of the Income and Property Tax at the end of three years extremely uncertain and improbable." The amendment was rejected by 236 votes to 142. In the debate the following Speech was made.

SIR, if the question now at issue were merely a financial or a commercial question, I should be unwilling to offer myself to your notice: for I am well aware that there are, both on your right and on your left hand, many gentlemen far more deeply versed in financial and commercial science than myself; and I should think that I discharged my duty better by listening to them than by assuming the office of a teacher. But, Sir, the question on which we are at issue with Her Majesty's Ministers is neither a financial nor a commercial question. I do not understand it to be disputed that, if we were to pronounce our decision with reference merely to fiscal and mercantile considerations, we should at once adopt the plan recommended by my noble friend. Indeed the right honourable gentleman, the late President of the Board of Trade,* has distinctly admitted this. He says that the Ministers of the Crown call upon us to sacrifice great pecuniary advantages and great commercial facilities, for the purpose of maintaining a moral principle. Neither in any former debate nor in the debate of this night has any person ventured to deny that, both as respects the public purse and as respects the interests of trade, the course recommended by my noble friend is preferable to the course recommended by the Government.

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* Mr Gladstone.

The objections to my noble friend's amendment, then, are purely moral objections. We lie, it seems, under a moral obligation to make a distinction between the produce of free labour and the produce of slave labour. Now I should be very unwilling to incur the imputation of being indifferent to moral obligations. I do, however, think that it is in my power to show strong reasons for believing that the moral obligation pleaded by the Ministers has no existence. If there be no such moral obligation, then, as it is conceded on the other side that all fiscal and commercial arguments are on the side of my noble friend, it follows that we ought to adopt his amendment.

The right honourable gentleman, the late President of the Board of Trade, has said that the Government does not pretend to act with perfect consistency as to this distinction between free labour and slave labour. It was, indeed, necessary that he should say this; for the policy of the Government is obviously most inconsistent. Perfect consistency, I admit, we are not to expect in human affairs. But, surely, there is a decent consistency which ought to be observed; and of this the right honourable gentleman himself seems to be sensible; for he asks how, if we admit sugar grown by Brazilian slaves, we can with decency continue to stop Brazilian vessels engaged in the slave trade. This argument, whatever be its value, proceeds on the very correct supposition that the test of sincerity in individuals, in parties, and in governments, is consistency. The right honourable gentleman feels, as we must all feel, that it is impossible to give credit for good faith to a man who on one occasion pleads a scruple of conscience as an excuse for not doing a certain thing, and who on other occasions, where there is no essential difference of circumstances, does that very thing without any scruple at all. I do not wish to use such a word as hypocrisy, or to impute that odious vice to any gentleman on either side of the House. But whoever declares one moment that he feels himself bound by a certain moral rule, and the next moment, in a case strictly similar, acts in direct defiance of that rule, must submit to have, if not his honesty, yet at least his power of discriminating right from wrong very gravely questioned.

Now, Sir, I deny the existence of the moral obligation pleaded by the Government. I deny that we are under any moral obligation to turn our fiscal code into a penal code, for the purpose of correcting vices in the institutions of independent states. I say that, if you suppose such a moral obligation to be in force, the supposition leads to consequences from which every one of us would recoil, to consequences which would throw the whole commercial and political system of the world into confusion. I say that, if such a moral obligation exists, our financial legislation is one mass of injustice and inhumanity. And I say more especially that, if such a moral obligation exists, the right honourable Baronet's Budget is one mass of injustice and inhumanity.

Observe, I am not disputing the paramount authority of moral obligation. I am not setting up pecuniary considerations against moral considerations. I know that it would be not only a wicked but a short-sighted policy, to aim at making a nation like this great and prosperous by violating the laws of justice. To those laws, enjoin what they may, I am prepared to submit. But I will not palter with them: I will not cite them to day in order to serve one turn, and quibble them away to-morrow in order to serve another. I will not have two standards of right; one to be applied when I wish to protect a favourite interest at the public cost; and another to be applied when I wish to replenish the

Exchequer, and to give an impulse to trade. I will not have two weights or two measures. I will not blow hot and cold, play fast and loose, strain at a gnat and swallow a camel. Can the Government say as much? Are gentlemen opposite prepared to act in conformity with their own principle? They need not look long for opportunities. The Statute Book swarms with enactments directly opposed to the rule which they profess to respect. I will take a single instance from our existing laws, and propound it to the gentlemen opposite as a test, if I must not say of their sincerity, yet of their power of moral discrimination. Take the article of tobacco. Not only do you admit the tobacco of the United States which is grown by slaves; not only do you admit the tobacco of Cuba which is grown by slaves, and by slaves, as you tell us, recently imported from Africa; but you actually interdict the free labourer of the United Kingdom from growing tobacco. You have long had in your Statute Book laws prohibiting the cultivation of tobacco in England, and authorising the Government to destroy all tobacco plantations, except a few square yards, which are suffered to exist unmolested in botanical gardens, for purposes of science. These laws did not extend to Ireland. The free peasantry of Ireland began to grow tobacco. The cultivation spread fast. Down came your legislation upon it; and now, if the Irish freeman dares to engage in competition with the slaves of Virginia and Havannah, you exchequer him; you ruin him; you grub up his plantation. Here, then, we have a test by which we may try the consistency of the gentlemen opposite. I ask you, are you prepared, I do not say to exclude the slave grown tobacco, but to take away from slave grown tobacco the monopoly which you now give to it, and to permit the free labourer of the United Kingdom to enter into competition on equal terms, on any terms, with the negro who works under the lash? I am confident that the three right honourable gentleman opposite, the First Lord of the Treasury, the Chancellor of the Exchequer, and the late President of the Board of Trade, will all with one voice answer "No." And why not? "Because," say they, "it will injure the revenue. True it is," they will say, "that the tobacco imported from abroad is grown by slaves, and by slaves many of whom have been recently carried across the Atlantic in defiance, not only of justice and humanity, but of law and treaty. True it is that the cultivators of the United Kingdom are freemen. But then on the imported tobacco we are able to raise at the Custom House a duty of six hundred per cent., sometimes indeed of twelve hundred per cent.: and, if tobacco were grown here, it would be difficult to get an excise duty of even a hundred per cent. We cannot submit to this loss of revenue; and therefore we must give a monopoly to the slaveholder, and make it penal in the freeman to evade that monopoly." You may be right; but, in the name of common sense, be consistent. If this moral obligation of which you talk so much be one which may with propriety yield to fiscal considerations, let us have Brazilian sugars. If it be paramount to all fiscal considerations, let us at least have British snuff and cigars.

The present Ministers may indeed plead that they are not the authors of the laws which prohibit the cultivation of tobacco in Great Britain and Ireland. That is true. The present Government found those laws in existence: and no doubt there is good sense in the Conservative doctrine that many things which ought not to have been set up ought not, when they have been set up, to be hastily and rudely pulled down. But what will the right honourable Baronet urge in vindication of his own new

Budget? He is not content with maintaining laws which he finds already existing in favour of produce grown by slaves. He introduces a crowd of new laws to the same effect. He comes down to the House with a proposition for entirely taking away the duties on the importation of raw cotton. He glories in this scheme. He tells us that it is in strict accordance with the soundest principles of legislation. He tells us that it will be a blessing to the country. I agree with him, and I intend to vote with him. But how is all this cotton grown? Is it not grown by slaves? Again I say, you may be right; but, in the name of common sense, be consistent. I saw, with no small amusement, a few days ago, a paragraph by one of the right honourable Baronet's eulogists, which was to the following effect:—"Thus has this eminent statesman given to the English labourer a large supply of a most important raw material, and has manfully withstood those ravenous Whigs who wished to inundate our country with sugar dyed in negro blood." With what, I should like to know, is the right honourable Baronet's cotton dyed?

Formerly, indeed, an attempt was made to distinguish between the cultivation of cotton and the cultivation of sugar. The cultivation of sugar, it was said, was peculiarly fatal to the health and life of the slave. But that plea, whatever it may have been worth, must now be abandoned; for the right honourable Baronet now proposes to reduce, to a very great extent, the duty on slave grown sugar imported from the United States.

Then a new distinction is set up. The United States, it is said, have slavery; but they have no slave trade. I deny that assertion. I say that the sugar and cotton of the United States are the fruits, not only of slavery, but of the slave trade. And I say further that, if there be on the surface of this earth a country which, before God and man, is more accountable than any other for the misery and degradation of the African race, that country is not Brazil, the produce of which the right honourable Baronet excludes, but the United States, the produce of which he proposes to admit on more favourable terms than ever. I have no pleasure in going into an argument of this nature. I do not conceive that it is the duty of a member of the English Parliament to discuss abuses which exist in other societies. Such discussion seldom tends to produce any reform of such abuses, and has a direct tendency to wound national pride, and to inflame national animosities. I would willingly avoid this subject: but the right honourable Baronet leaves me no choice. He turns this House into a Court of Judicature for the purpose of criticising and comparing the institutions of independent States. He tells us that our Tariff is to be made an instrument for rewarding the justice and humanity of some Foreign Governments, and for punishing the barbarity of others. He binds up the dearest interests of my constituents with questions with which otherwise I should, as a Member of Parliament, have nothing to do. I would gladly keep silence on such questions. But it cannot be. The tradesmen and the professional men whom I represent say to me, "Why are we to be loaded, certainly for some years, probably for ever, with a tax, admitted by those who impose it to be grievous, unequal, inquisitorial? Why are we to be loaded in time of peace with burdens heretofore reserved for the exigencies of war?" The paper manufacturer, the soap manufacturer, say, "Why, if the Income Tax is to be continued, are our important and suffering branches of industry to have no relief?" And the answer is, "Because Brazil does not behave so well as the United States towards the negro race." Can I then avoid instituting a comparison? Am I not bound to bring to the test the truth of an assertion pregnant with consequences so momentous to those who have sent me hither? I must speak out; and, if what I say gives offence and produces inconvenience, for that offence and for that inconvenience the Government is responsible.

I affirm, then, that there exists in the United States a slave trade, not less odious or demoralising, nay, I do in my conscience believe, more odious and more demoralising than that which is carried on between Africa and Brazil. North Carolina and Virginia are to Louisiana and Alabama what Congo is to Rio Janeiro. The slave States of the Union are divided into two classes, the breeding States, where the human beasts of burden increase and multiply and become strong for labour, and the sugar and cotton States to which those beasts of burden are sent to be worked to death. To what an extent the traffic in man is carried on we may learn by comparing the census of 1830 with the census of 1840. North Carolina and Virginia are, as I have said, great breeding States. During the ten years from 1830 to 1840 the slave population of North Carolina was almost stationary. The slave population of Virginia positively decreased. Yet, both in North Carolina and Virginia propagation was, during those ten years, going on fast. The number of births among the slaves in those States exceeded by hundreds of thousands the number of the deaths. What then became of the surplus? Look to the returns from the Southern States, from the States whose produce the right honourable Baronet proposes to admit with reduced duty or with no duty at all; and you will see. You will find that the increase in the breeding States was barely sufficient to meet the demand of the consuming States. In Louisiana, for example, where we know that the negro population is worn down by cruel toil, and would not, if left to itself, keep up its numbers, there were, in 1830, one hundred and seven thousand slaves; in 1840, one hundred and seventy thousand. In Alabama, the slave population during those ten years much more than doubled; it rose from one hundred and seventeen thousand to two hundred and fifty-three thousand. In Mississippi it actually tripled. It rose from sixty-five thousand to one hundred and ninety-five thousand. So much for the extent of this slave trade. And as to its nature, ask any Englishman who has ever travelled in the Southern States. Jobbers go about from plantation to plantation looking out for proprietors who are not easy in their circumstances, and who are likely to sell cheap. A black boy is picked up here; a black girl there. The dearest ties of nature and of marriage are torn asunder as rudely as they were ever torn asunder by any slave captain on the coast of Guinea. A gang of three or four hundred negroes is made up; and then these wretches, handcuffed, fettered, guarded by armed men, are driven southward, as you would drive,—or rather as you would not drive,—a herd of oxen to Smithfield, that they may undergo the deadly labour of the sugar mill near the mouth of the Mississippi. A very few years of that labour in that climate suffice to send the stoutest African to his grave. But he can well be spared. While he is fast sinking into premature old age, negro boys in Virginia are growing up as fast into vigorous manhood to supply the void which cruelty is making in Louisiana. God forbid that I should extenuate the horrors of the slave trade in any form! But I do think this its worst form. Bad enough is it that civilised men should sail to an uncivilised quarter of the world where slavery exists, should there buy wretched barbarians, and should carry them away to labour in a distant land: bad enough! But that a civilised man, a baptized man, a man proud of being a citizen of a free state, a man frequenting a Christian church, should breed slaves for exportation, and, if the whole horrible truth must be told, should even beget slaves for exportation, should see children, sometimes his own children, gambolling around him from infancy, should watch their growth, should become familiar with their faces, and should then sell them for four or five hundred dollars a head, and send them to lead in a remote country a life which is a lingering death, a life about which the best thing that can be said is that it is sure to be short; this does, I own, excite a horror exceeding even the horror excited by that slave trade which is the curse of the African coast. And mark: I am not speaking of any rare case, of any instance of eccentric depravity. I am speaking of a trade as regular as the trade in pigs between Dublin and Liverpool, or as the trade in coals between the Tyne and the Thames.

There is another point to which I must advert. I have no wish to apologise for slavery as it exists in Brazil; but this I say, that slavery, as it exists in Brazil, though a fearful evil, seems to me a much less hopeless evil than slavery as it exists in the United States. In estimating the character of negro slavery we must never forget one most important ingredient; an ingredient which was wanting to slavery as it was known to the Greeks and Romans; an ingredient which was wanting to slavery as it appeared in Europe during the middle ages; I mean the antipathy of colour. Where this antipathy exists in a high degree, it is difficult to conceive how the white masters and the black labourers can ever be mingled together, as the lords and villeins in many parts of the Old World have been, in one free community. Now this antipathy is notoriously much stronger in the United States than in the Brazils. In the Brazils the free people of colour are numerous. They are not excluded from honourable callings. You may find among them merchants, physicians, lawyers: many of them bear arms; some have been admitted to holy orders. Whoever knows what dignity, what sanctity, the Church of Rome ascribes to the person of a priest, will at once perceive the important consequences which follow from this last circumstance. It is by no means unusual to see a white penitent kneeling before the spiritual tribunal of a negro, confessing his sins to a negro, receiving absolution from a negro. It is by no means unusual to see a negro dispensing the Eucharist to a circle of whites. I need not tell the House what emotions of amazement and of rage such a spectacle would excite in Georgia or South Carolina. Fully admitting, therefore, as I do, that Brazilian slavery is a horrible evil, I yet must say that, if I were called upon to declare whether I think the chances of the African race on the whole better in Brazil or in the United States, I should at once answer that they are better in Brazil. I think it not improbable that in eighty or a hundred years the black population of Brazil may be free and happy. I see no reasonable prospect of such a change in the United States.

The right honourable gentleman, the late President of the Board of Trade, has said much about that system of maritime police by which we have attempted to sweep slave trading vessels from the great highway of nations. Now what has been the conduct of Brazil, and what has been the conduct of the United States, as respects that system of police? Brazil has come into the system; the United States have thrown every impediment in the way of the system. What opinion Her Majesty's Ministers entertain respecting the Right of Search we know from a letter of my Lord Aberdeen which has, within a few days, been laid on our table. I believe that I state correctly the sense of that letter when I say that the noble Earl regards the Right of Search as an efficacious means, and as the only efficacious means, of preventing the maritime slave trade. He expresses most serious doubts whether any substitute can be devised. I think that this check would be a most valuable one, if all nations would submit to it; and I applaud the humanity which has induced successive British administrations to exert themselves for the purpose of obtaining the concurrence of foreign Powers in so excellent a plan. Brazil consented to admit the Right of Search; the United States refused, and by refusing deprived the Right of Search of half its value. Not content with refusing to admit the Right of Search, they even disputed the right of visit, a right which no impartial publicist in Europe will deny to be in strict conformity with the Law of Nations. Nor was this all. In every part of the Continent of Europe the diplomatic agents of the Cabinet of Washington have toiled to induce other nations to imitate the example of the United States. You cannot have forgotten General Cass's letter. You cannot have forgotten the terms in which his Government communicated to him its approbation of his conduct. You know as well as I do that, if the United States had submitted to the Right of Search, there would have been no outcry against that right in France. Nor do I much blame the French. It is but natural that, when one maritime Power makes it a point of honour to refuse us this right, other maritime Powers should think that they cannot, without degradation, take a different course. It is but natural that a Frenchman, proud of his country, should ask why the tricolor is to be less respected than the stars and stripes. The right honourable gentleman says that, if we assent to my noble friend's amendment, we shall no longer be able to maintain the Right of Search. Sir, he need not trouble himself about that right. It is already gone. We have agreed to negotiate on the subject with France. Everybody knows how that negotiation will end. The French flag will be exempted from search: Spain will instantly demand, if she has not already demanded, similar exemption; and you may as well let her have it with a good grace, and without wrangling. For a Right of Search, from which the flags of France and America are exempted, is not worth a dispute. The only system, therefore, which, in the opinion of Her Majesty's Ministers, has yet been found efficacious for the prevention of the maritime slave trade, is in fact abandoned. And who is answerable for this? The United States of America. The chief guilt even of the slave trade between Africa and Brazil lies, not with the Government of Brazil, but with that of the United States. And yet the right honourable Baronet proposes to punish Brazil for the slave trade, and in the same breath proposes to show favour to the United States, because the United States are pure from the crime of slave trading. I thank the right honourable gentleman, the late President of the Board of Trade, for reminding me of Mr Calhoun's letter. I could not have wished for a better illustration of my argument. Let anybody who has read that letter say what is the country which, if we take on ourselves to avenge the wrongs of Africa, ought to be the first object of our indignation. The Government of the United States has placed itself on a bad eminence to which Brazil never aspired, and which Brazil, even if aspiring to it, never could attain. The Government of the United States has formally declared itself the patron, the champion of negro slavery all over the world, the evil genius, the Arimanes of the African race, and seems to take pride in this shameful and odious distinction. I well understand that an American statesman may say, "Slavery is a horrible evil; but we were born to it, we see no way at present to rid ourselves of it: and we must endure it as we best may." Good and enlightened men may hold such language; but such is not the language of the American Cabinet. That Cabinet is actuated by a propagandist spirit, and labours to spread servitude and barbarism with an ardour such as no other Government ever showed in the cause of freedom and civilisation. Nay more; the doctrine held at Washington is that this holy cause sanctifies the most unholy means. These zealots of slavery think themselves justified in snatching away provinces on the right hand and on the left, in defiance of public faith and international law, from neighbouring countries which have free institutions, and this avowedly for the purpose of diffusing over a wider space the greatest curse that afflicts humanity. They put themselves at the head of the slavedriving interest throughout the world, just as Elizabeth put herself at the head of the Protestant interest; and wherever their favourite institution is in danger, are ready to stand by it as Elizabeth stood by the Dutch. This, then, I hold to be demonstrated, that of all societies now existing, the Republic of the United States is by far the most culpable as respects slavery and the slave trade.

Now then I come to the right honourable Baronet's Budget. He tells us, that he will not admit Brazilian sugar, because the Brazilian Government tolerates slavery and connives at the slave trade; and he tells us at the same time, that he will admit the slave grown cotton and the slave grown sugar of the United States. I am utterly at a loss to understand how he can vindicate his consistency. He tells us that if we adopt my noble friend's proposition, we shall give a stimulus to the slave trade between Africa and Brazil. Be it so. But is it not equally clear that, if we adopt the right honourable Baronet's own propositions, we shall give a stimulus to the slave trade between Virginia and Louisiana? I have not the least doubt that, as soon as the contents of his Budget are known on the other side of the Atlantic, the slave trade will become more active than it is at this moment; that the jobbers in human flesh and blood will be more busy than ever; that the droves of manacled negroes, moving southward to their doom, will be more numerous on every road. These will be the fruits of the right honourable Baronet's measure. Yet he tells us that this part of his Budget is framed on sound principles and will greatly benefit the country; and he tells us truth. I mean to vote with him; and I can perfectly, on my own principles, reconcile to my conscience the vote which I shall give. How the right honourable Baronet can reconcile the course which he takes to his conscience, I am at a loss to conceive, and am not a little curious to know. No man is more capable than he of doing justice to any cause which he undertakes; and it would be most presumptuous in me to anticipate the defence which he means to set up. But I hope that the House will suffer me, as one who feels deeply on this subject, now to explain the reasons which convince me that I ought to vote for the right honourable Baronet's propositions respecting the produce of the United States. In explaining those reasons, I at the same time explain the reasons which induce me to vote with my noble friend to-night.

I say then, Sir, that I fully admit the paramount authority of moral obligations. But it is important that we should accurately understand the nature and extent of those obligations. We are clearly bound to wrong no man. Nay, more, we are bound to regard all men with benevolence. But to every individual, and to every society, Providence has assigned a sphere within which benevolence ought to be peculiarly active; and if an individual or a society neglects what lies within that sphere in order to attend to what lies without, the result is likely to be harm and not good.

It is thus in private life. We should not be justified in injuring a stranger in order to benefit ourselves or those who are dearest to us. Every stranger is entitled, by the laws of humanity, to claim from us certain reasonable good offices. But it is not true that we are bound to exert ourselves to serve a mere stranger as we are bound to exert ourselves to serve our own relations. A man would not be justified in subjecting his wife and children to disagreeable privations, in order to save even from utter ruin some foreigner whom he never saw. And if a man were so absurd and perverse as to starve his own family in order to relieve people with whom he had no acquaintance, there can be little doubt that his crazy charity would produce much more misery than happiness.

It is the same with nations. No statesman ought to injure other countries in order to benefit his own country. No statesman ought to lose any fair opportunity of rendering to foreign nations such good offices as he can render without a breach of the duty which he owes to the society of which he is a member. But, after all, our country is our country, and has the first claim on our attention. There is nothing, I conceive, of narrow-mindedness in this patriotism. I do not say that we ought to prefer the happiness of one particular society to the happiness of mankind; but I say that, by exerting ourselves to promote the happiness of the society with which we are most nearly connected, and with which we are best acquainted, we shall do more to promote the happiness of mankind than by busying ourselves about matters which we do not fully understand, and cannot efficiently control.

There are great evils connected with the factory system in this country. Some of those evils might, I am inclined to think, be removed or mitigated by legislation. On that point many of my friends differ from me; but we all agree in thinking that it is the duty of a British Legislator to consider the subject attentively, and with a serious sense of responsibility. There are also great social evils in Russia. The peasants of that empire are in a state of servitude. The sovereign of Russia is bound by the most solemn obligations to consider whether he can do anything to improve the condition of that large portion of his subjects. If we watch over our factory children, and he watches over his peasants, much good may be done. But would any good be done if the Emperor of Russia and the British Parliament were to interchange functions; if he were to take under his patronage the weavers of Lancashire, if we were to take under our patronage the peasants of the Volga; if he were to say, "You shall send no cotton to Russia till you pass a Ten Hours' Bill;" if we were to say, "You shall send no hemp or tallow to England till you emancipate your serfs?"

On these principles, Sir, which seem to me to be the principles of plain common sense, I can, without resorting to any casuistical subtilties, vindicate to my own conscience, and, I hope, to my country, the whole course which I have pursued with respect to slavery. When I first came into Parliament, slavery still existed in the British dominions. I had, as it was natural that I should have, a strong feeling on the subject. I exerted myself, according to my station and to the measure of my abilities, on the side of the oppressed. I shrank from no personal sacrifice in that cause. I do not mention this as matter of boast. It was no more than my duty. The right honourable gentleman, the Secretary of State for the Home Department, knows that, in 1833, I disapproved of one part of the measure which Lord Grey's Government proposed on the subject of slavery. I was in office; and office was then as important to me as it could be to any man. I put my resignation into the hands of Lord Spencer, and both spoke and voted against the Administration. To my surprise, Lord Grey and Lord Spencer refused to accept my resignation, and I remained in office; but during some days I considered myself as out of the service of the Crown. I at the same time heartily joined in laying a heavy burden on the country for the purpose of compensating the planters. I acted thus, because, being a British Legislator, I thought myself bound, at any cost to myself and to my constituents, to remove a foul stain from the British laws, and to redress the wrongs endured by persons who, as British subjects, were placed under my guardianship. But my especial obligations in respect of negro slavery ceased when slavery itself ceased in that part of the world for the welfare of which I, as a member of this House, was accountable. As for the blacks in the United States, I feel for them, God knows. But I am not their keeper. I do not stand in the same relation to the slaves of Louisiana and Alabama in which I formerly stood to the slaves of Demerara and Jamaica. I am bound, on the other hand, by the most solemn obligations, to promote the interests of millions of my own countrymen, who are indeed by no means in a state so miserable and degraded as that of the slaves in the United States, but who are toiling hard from sunrise to sunset in order to obtain a scanty subsistence; who are often scarcely able to procure the necessaries of life; and whose lot would be alleviated if I could open new markets to them, and free them from taxes which now press heavily on their industry. I see clearly that, by excluding the produce of slave labour from our ports, I should inflict great evil on my fellow-subjects and constituents. But the good which, by taking such a course, I should do to the negroes in the United States seems to me very problematical. That by admitting slave grown cotton and slave grown sugar we do, in some sense, encourage slavery and the Slave Trade, may be true. But I doubt whether, by turning our fiscal code into a penal code for restraining the cruelty of the American planters, we should not, on the whole, injure the negroes rather than benefit them. No independent nation will endure to be told by another nation, "We are more virtuous than you; we have sate in judgment on your institutions; we find them to be bad; and, as a punishment for your offences, we condemn you to pay higher duties at our Custom House than we demand from the rest of the world." Such language naturally excites the resentment of foreigners. I can make allowance for their susceptibility. For I myself sympathise with them. I know that Ireland has been misgoverned; and I have done, and purpose to do, my best to redress her grievances. But when I take up a New York journal, and read there the rants of President Tyler's son, I feel so much disgusted by such insolent absurdity that I am for a moment inclined to deny that Ireland has any reason whatever to complain. It seems to me that if ever slavery is peaceably extinguished in the United States, that great and happy change must be brought about by the efforts of those enlightened and respectable American citizens who hate slavery as much as we hate it. Now I cannot help fearing that, if the British Parliament were to proclaim itself the protector and avenger of the American slave, the pride of those excellent persons would take the alarm. It might become a point of national honour with them to stand by an institution which they have hitherto regarded as a national disgrace. We should thus confer no benefit on the negro; and we should at the same time inflict cruel suffering on our own countrymen.

On these grounds, Sir, I can, with a clear conscience, vote for the right honourable Baronet's propositions respecting the cotton and sugar of the United States. But on exactly the same grounds I can, with a clear conscience, vote for the amendment of my noble friend. And I confess that I shall be much surprised if the right honourable Baronet shall be able to point out any distinction between the cases.

I have detained you too long, Sir; yet there is one point to which I must refer; I mean the refining. Was such a distinction ever heard of? Is there anything like it in all Pascal's Dialogues with the old Jesuit? Not for the world are we to eat one ounce of Brazilian sugar. But we import the accursed thing; we bond it; we employ our skill and machinery to render it more alluring to the eye and to the palate; we export it to Leghorn and Hamburg; we send it to all the coffee houses of Italy and Germany: we pocket a profit on all this; and then we put on a Pharisaical air, and thank God that we are not like those wicked Italians and Germans who have no scruple about swallowing slave grown sugar. Surely this sophistry is worthy only of the worst class of false witnesses. "I perjure myself! Not for the world. I only kissed my thumb; I did not put my lips to the calf-skin." I remember something very like the right honourable Baronet's morality in a Spanish novel which I read long ago. I beg pardon of the House for detaining them with such a trifle; but the story is much to the purpose. A wandering lad, a sort of Gil Blas, is taken into the service of a rich old silversmith, a most pious man, who is always telling his beads, who hears mass daily, and observes the feasts and fasts of the church with the utmost scrupulosity. The silversmith is always preaching honesty and piety. "Never," he constantly repeats to his young assistant, "never touch what is not your own; never take liberties with sacred things." Sacrilege, as uniting theft with profaneness, is the sin of which he has the deepest horror. One day, while he is lecturing after his usual fashion, an ill-looking fellow comes into the shop with a sack under his arm. "Will you buy these?" says the visitor, and produces from the sack some church plate and a rich silver crucifix. "Buy them!" cries the pious man. "No, nor touch them; not for the world. I know where you got them. Wretch that you are, have you no care for your soul?" "Well then," says the thief, "if you will not buy them, will you melt them down for me?" "Melt them down!" answers the silversmith, "that is quite another matter." He takes the chalices and the crucifix with a pair of tongs; the silver, thus in bond, is dropped into the crucible, melted, and delivered to the thief, who lays down five pistoles and decamps with his booty. The young servant stares at this strange scene. But the master very gravely resumes his lecture. "My son," he says, "take warning by that sacrilegious knave, and take example by me. Think what a load of guilt lies on his conscience. You will see him hanged before long. But as to me, you saw that I would not touch the stolen property. I keep these tongs for such occasions. And thus I thrive in the fear of God, and manage to turn an honest penny." You talk of morality. What can be more immoral than to bring ridicule on the very name of morality, by drawing distinctions where there are no differences? Is it not enough that this dishonest casuistry has already poisoned our theology? Is it not enough that a set of quibbles has been devised, under cover of which a divine may hold the worst doctrines of the Church of Rome, and may hold with them the best benefice of the Church of England? Let us at least keep the debates of this House free from the sophistry of Tract Number Ninety.

And then the right honourable gentleman, the late President of the

Board of Trade, wonders that other nations consider our abhorrence of slavery and the Slave Trade as sheer hypocrisy. Why, Sir, how should it be otherwise? And, if the imputation annoys us, whom have we to thank for it? Numerous and malevolent as our detractors are, none of them was ever so absurd as to charge us with hypocrisy because we took slave grown tobacco and slave grown cotton, till the Government began to affect scruples about admitting slave grown sugar. Of course, as soon as our Ministers ostentatiously announced to all the world that our fiscal system was framed on a new and sublime moral principle, everybody began to inquire whether we consistently adhered to that principle. It required much less acuteness and much less malevolence than that of our neighbours to discover that this hatred of slave grown produce was mere grimace. They see that we not only take tobacco produced by means of slavery and of the Slave Trade, but that we positively interdict freemen in this country from growing tobacco. They see that we not only take cotton produced by means of slavery and of the Slave Trade, but that we are about to exempt this cotton from all duty. They see that we are at this moment reducing the duty on the slave grown sugar of Louisiana. How can we expect them to believe that it is from a sense of justice and humanity that we lay a prohibitory duty on the sugar of Brazil? I care little for the abuse which any foreign press or any foreign tribune may throw on the Machiavelian policy of perfidious Albion. What gives me pain is, not that the charge of hypocrisy is made, but that I am unable to see how it is to be refuted.

Yet one word more. The right honourable gentleman, the late President of the Board of Trade, has quoted the opinions of two persons, highly distinguished by the exertions which they made for the abolition of slavery, my lamented friend, Sir Thomas Fowell Buxton, and Sir Stephen Lushington. It is most true that those eminent persons did approve of the principle laid down by the right honourable Baronet opposite in 1841. I think that they were in error; but in their error I am sure that they were sincere, and I firmly believe that they would have been consistent. They would have objected, no doubt, to my noble friend's amendment; but they would have objected equally to the right honourable Baronet's budget. It was not prudent, I think, in gentlemen opposite to allude to those respectable names. The mention of those names irresistibly carries the mind back to the days of the great struggle for negro freedom. And it is but natural that we should ask where, during that struggle, were those who now profess such loathing for slave grown sugar? The three persons who are chiefly responsible for the financial and commercial policy of the present Government I take to be the right honourable Baronet at the head of the Treasury, the right honourable gentleman the Chancellor of the Exchequer, and the right honourable gentleman the late President of the Board of Trade. Is there anything in the past conduct of any one of the three which can lead me to believe that his sensibility to the evils of slavery is greater than mine? I am sure that the right honourable Baronet the first Lord of the Treasury would think that I was speaking ironically if I were to compliment him on his zeal for the liberty of the negro race. Never once, during the whole of the long and obstinate conflict which ended in the abolition of slavery in our colonies, did he give one word, one sign of encouragement to those who suffered and laboured for the good cause. The whole weight of his great abilities and influence was in the other scale. I well remember that, so late as 1833, he declared in this House that he could give his assent neither to the plan of immediate emancipation proposed by my noble friend who now represents Sunderland,* nor to the plan of gradual emancipation proposed by Lord Grey's government. I well remember that he said, "I shall claim no credit hereafter on account of this bill; all that I desire is to be absolved from the responsibility." As to the other two right honourable gentlemen whom I have mentioned, they are West Indians; and their conduct was that of West Indians. I do not wish to give them pain, or to throw any disgraceful imputation on them. Personally I regard them with feelings of goodwill and respect. I do not question their sincerity; but I know that the most honest men are but too prone to deceive themselves into the belief that the path towards which they are impelled by their own interests and passions is the path of duty. I am conscious that this might be my own case; and I believe it to be theirs. As the right honourable gentleman, the Chancellor of the Exchequer, has left the House, I will only say that, with respect to the question of slavery, he acted after the fashion of the class to which he belonged. But as the right honourable gentleman, the late President of the Board of Trade, is in his place, he must allow me to bring to his recollection the part which he took in the debates of 1833. He then said, "You raise a great clamour about the cultivation of sugar. You say that it is a species of industry fatal to the health and life of the slave. I do not deny that there is some difference between the labour of a sugar plantation and the labour of a cotton plantation, or a coffee plantation. But the difference is not so great as you think. In marshy soils, the slaves who cultivate the sugar cane suffer severely. But in Barbadoes, where the air is good, they thrive and multiply." He proceeded to say that, even at the worst, the labour of a sugar plantation was not more unhealthy than some kinds of labour in which the manufacturers of England are employed, and which nobody thinks of prohibiting. He particularly mentioned grinding. "See how grinding destroys the health, the sight, the life. Yet there is no outcry against grinding." He went on to say that the whole question ought to be left by Parliament to the West Indian Legislature. [*Mr Gladstone:* Really I never said so. You are not quoting me at all correctly.] What, not about the sugar cultivation and the grinding? [*Mr Gladstone:* That is correct; but I never recommended that the question should be left to the West Indian Legislatures.] I have quoted correctly. But since my right honourable friend disclaims the sentiment imputed to him by the reporters, I shall say no more about it. I have no doubt that he is quite right, and that what he said was misunderstood. What is undisputed is amply sufficient for my purpose. I see that the persons who now show so much zeal against slavery in foreign countries, are the same persons who formerly countenanced slavery in the British Colonies. I remember a time when they maintained that we were bound in justice to protect slave grown sugar against the competition of free grown sugar, and even of British free grown sugar. I now hear them calling on us to protect free grown sugar against the competition of slave grown sugar. I remember a time when they extenuated as much as they could the evils of the sugar cultivation. I now hear them exaggerating those evils. But, devious as their course has been, there is one clue by which I can easily track them through the whole maze. Inconstant in everything else, they are constant in demanding protection for the West Indian planter. While he employs slaves, they do their best to apologise for the evils of slavery. As soon as he is forced to employ freemen, they begin to cry up the blessings of freedom. They go round the whole compass, and yet to one point they steadfastly adhere: and that point is the interest of the West Indian proprietors. I have done, Sir; and I thank the House most sincerely for the patience and indulgence with which I have been heard. I hope that I have at least vindicated my own consistency. How Her Majesty's Ministers will vindicate their consistency, how they will show that their conduct has at all times been guided by the same principles, or even that their conduct at the present time is guided by any fixed principle at all, I am unable to conjecture.

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* Lord Howick.

A SPEECH

DELIVERED IN THE HOUSE OF COMMONS ON THE 14TH OF APRIL, 1845.

On Saturday the eleventh of April, 1845, Sir Robert Peel moved the second reading of the Maynooth College Bill. After a debate of six nights the motion was carried by 323 votes to 176. On the second night the following Speech was made.

I DO not mean, Sir, to follow the honourable gentleman who has just sate down into a discussion on an amendment which is not now before us. When my honourable friend the Member for Sheffield shall think it expedient to make a motion on that important subject to which he has repeatedly called the attention of the House, I may, perhaps, ask to be heard. At present I shall content myself with explaining the reasons which convince me that it is my duty to vote for the second reading of this bill; and I cannot, I think, better explain those reasons than by passing in review, as rapidly as I can, the chief objections which have been made to the bill here and elsewhere.

The objectors, Sir, may be divided into three classes. The first class consists of those persons who object, not to the principle of the grant to Maynooth College, but merely to the amount. The second class consists of persons who object on principle to all grants made to a church which they regard as corrupt. The third class consists of persons who object on principle to all grants made to churches, whether corrupt or pure.

Now, Sir, of those three classes the first is evidently that which takes the most untenable ground. How any person can think that Maynooth College ought to be supported by public money, and yet can think this bill too bad to be suffered to go into Committee, I do not well understand. I am forced however to believe that there are many such persons. For I cannot but remember that the old annual vote attracted scarcely any notice; and I see that this bill has produced violent excitement. I cannot but remember that the old annual vote used to pass with very few dissentients; and I see that great numbers of gentlemen, who never were among those dissentients, have crowded down to the House in order to divide against this bill. It is indeed certain that a large proportion, I believe a majority, of those members who cannot, as they assure us, conscientiously support the plan proposed by the right honourable

Baronet at the head of the Government, would without the smallest scruple have supported him if he had in this, as in former years, asked us to give nine thousand pounds for twelve months. So it is: yet I cannot help wondering that it should be so. For how can any human ingenuity turn a question between nine thousand pounds and twenty-six thousand pounds, or between twelve months and an indefinite number of months, into a question of principle? Observe: I am not now answering those who maintain that nothing ought to be given out of the public purse to a corrupt church; nor am I now answering those who maintain that nothing ought to be given out of the public purse to any church whatever. They, I admit, oppose this bill on principle. I perfectly understand, though I do not myself hold, the opinion of the zealous voluntary who says, "Whether the Roman Catholic Church teaches truth or error, she ought to have no assistance from the State." I also perfectly understand, though I do not myself hold, the opinion of the zealous Protestant who says, "The Roman Catholic Church teaches error, and therefore ought to have no assistance from the State." But I cannot understand the reasoning of the man who says, "In spite of the errors of the Roman Catholic Church, I think that she ought to have some assistance from the State; but I am bound to mark my abhorrence of her errors by doling out to her a miserable pittance. Her tenets are so absurd and noxious that I will pay the professor who teaches them wages less than I should offer to my groom. Her rites are so superstitious that I will take care that they shall be performed in a chapel with a leaky roof and a dirty floor. By all means let us keep her a college, provided only that it be a shabby one. Let us support those who are intended to teach her doctrines and to administer her sacraments to the next generation, provided only that every future priest shall cost us less than a foot soldier. Let us board her young theologians; but let their larder be so scantily supplied that they may be compelled to break up before the regular vacation from mere want of food. Let us lodge them; but let their lodging be one in which they may be packed like pigs in a stye, and be punished for their heterodoxy by feeling the snow and the wind through the broken panes." Is it possible to conceive anything more absurd or more disgraceful? Can anything be clearer than this, that whatever it is lawful to do it is lawful to do well? If it be right that we should keep up this college at all, it must be right that we should keep it up respectably. Our national dignity is concerned. For this institution, whether good or bad, is, beyond all dispute, a very important institution. Its office is to form the character of those who are to form the character of millions. Whether we ought to extend any patronage to such an institution is a question about which wise and honest men may differ. But that, as we do extend our patronage to such an institution, our patronage ought to be worthy of the object, and worthy of the greatness of our country, is a proposition from which I am astonished to hear any person dissent.

It is, I must say, with a peculiarly bad grace that one of the members for the University to which I have the honour to belong,* a gentleman who never thought himself bound to say a word or to give a vote against the grant of nine thousand pounds, now vehemently opposes the grant of twenty-six thousand pounds as exorbitant. When I consider how munificently the colleges of Cambridge and Oxford are endowed, and with what pomp religion and learning are there surrounded; when I call to mind the long streets of palaces, the towers and oriels, the venerable cloisters, the trim gardens, the organs, the altar pieces, the solemn light of the stained windows, the libraries, the museums, the galleries of painting and sculpture; when I call to mind also the physical comforts which are provided both for instructors and for pupils; when I reflect that the very sizars and servitors are far better lodged and fed than those students who are to be, a few years hence, the priests and bishops of the Irish people; when I think of the spacious and stately mansions of the heads of houses, of the commodious chambers of the fellows and scholars, of the refectories, the combination rooms, the bowling greens, the stabling, of the state and luxury of the great feast days, of the piles of old plate on the tables, of the savoury steam of the kitchens, of the multitudes of geese and capons which turn at once on the spits, of the oceans of excellent ale in the butteries; and when I remember from whom all this splendour and plenty is derived; when I remember what was the faith of Edward the Third and of Henry the Sixth, of Margaret of Anjou and Margaret of Richmond, of William of Wykeham and William of Waynefleet, of Archbishop Chicheley and Cardinal Wolsey; when I remember what we have taken from the Roman Catholics, King's College, New College, Christ Church, my own Trinity; and when I look at the miserable Dotheboys Hall which we have given them in exchange, I feel, I must own, less proud than I could wish of being a Protestant and a Cambridge man.

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* The Honourable Charles Law, Member for the University of Cambridge.

Some gentlemen, it is true, have made an attempt to show that there is a distinction of principle between the old grant which they have always supported and the larger grant which they are determined to oppose. But never was attempt more unsuccessful. They say that, at the time of the Union, we entered into an implied contract with Ireland to keep up this college. We are therefore, they argue, bound by public faith to continue the old grant; but we are not bound to make any addition to that grant. Now, Sir, on this point, though on no other, I do most cordially agree with those petitioners who have, on this occasion, covered your table with such huge bales of spoiled paper and parchment. I deny the existence of any such contract. I think myself perfectly free to vote for the abolition of this college, if I am satisfied that it is a pernicious institution; as free as I am to vote against any item of the ordnance estimates; as free as I am to vote for a reduction of the number of marines. It is strange, too, that those who appeal to this imaginary contract should not perceive that, even if their fiction be admitted as true, it will by no means get them out of their difficulty. Tell us plainly what are the precise terms of the contract which you suppose Great Britain to have made with Ireland about this college. Whatever the terms be, they will not serve your purpose. Was the contract this, that the Imperial Parliament would do for the college what the Irish Parliament had been used to do? Or was the contract this, that the Imperial Parliament would keep the college in a respectable and efficient state? If the former was the contract, nine thousand pounds would be too much. If the latter was the contract, you will not, I am confident, be able to prove that twenty-six thousand pounds is too little.

I have now, I think, said quite as much as need be said in answer to those who maintain that we ought to give support to this college, but that the support ought to be niggardly and precarious. I now come to another and a much more formidable class of objectors. Their objections may be simply stated thus. No man can justifiably, either as an individual or as a trustee for the public, contribute to the dissemination of religious error. But the Church of Rome teaches religious error. Therefore we cannot justifiably contribute to the support of an institution of which the object is the dissemination of the doctrines of the Church of Rome. Now, Sir, I deny the major of this syllogism. I think that there are occasions on which we are bound to contribute to the dissemination of doctrines with which errors are inseparably intermingled. Let me be clearly understood. The question is not whether we should teach truth or teach error, but whether we should teach truth adulterated with error, or teach no truth at all. The constitution of the human mind is such that it is impossible to provide any machinery for the dissemination of truth which shall not, with the truth, disseminate some error. Even those rays which come down to us from the great source of light, pure as they are in themselves, no sooner enter that gross and dark atmosphere in which we dwell than they are so much refracted, discoloured, and obscured, that they too often lead us astray. It will be generally admitted that, if religious truth can be anywhere found untainted by error, it is in the Scriptures. Yet is there actually on the face of the globe a single copy of the Scriptures of which it can be said that it contains truth absolutely untainted with error? Is there any manuscript, any edition of the Old or New Testament in the original tongues, which any scholar will pronounce faultless? But to the vast majority of Christians the original tongues are and always must be unintelligible. With the exception of perhaps one man in ten thousand, we must be content with translations. And is there any translation in which there are not numerous mistakes? Are there not numerous mistakes even in our own authorised version, executed as that version was with painful diligence and care, by very able men, and under very splendid patronage? Of course mistakes must be still more numerous in those translations which pious men have lately made into Bengalee, Hindostanee, Tamul, Canarese, and other Oriental tongues. I admire the zeal, the industry, the energy of those who, in spite of difficulties which to ordinary minds would seem insurmountable, accomplished that arduous work. I applaud those benevolent societies which munificently encouraged that work. But I have been assured by good judges that the translations have many faults. And how should it have been otherwise? How should an Englishman produce a faultless translation from the Hebrew into the Cingalese? I say, therefore, that even the Scriptures, in every form in which men actually possess them, contain a certain portion of error. And, if this be so, how can you look for pure undefecated truth in any other composition? You contribute, without any scruple, to the printing of religious tracts, to the establishing of Sunday Schools, to the sending forth of missionaries. But are your tracts perfect? Are your schoolmasters infallible? Are your missionaries inspired? Look at the two churches which are established in this island. Will you say that they both teach truth without any mixture of error? That is impossible. For they teach different doctrines on more than one important subject. It is plain therefore, that if, as you tell us, it be a sin in a state to patronise an institution which teaches religious error, either the Church of England or the Church of Scotland ought to be abolished. But will anybody even venture to affirm that either of those churches teaches truth without any mixture of error? Have there not long been in the Church of Scotland two very different schools of theology? During many years, Dr Robertson, the head of the moderate party, and Dr Erskine, the head of the Calvinistic party, preached under the same roof, one in the morning, the other in the evening. They preached two different religions, so different that the followers of Robertson thought the followers of Erskine fanatics, and the followers of Erskine thought the followers of Robertson Arians or worse. And is there no mixture of error in the doctrine taught by the clergy of the Church of England? Is not the whole country at this moment convulsed by disputes as to what the doctrine of the Church on some important subjects really is? I shall not take on myself to say who is right and who is wrong. But this I say with confidence, that, whether the Tractarians or the Evangelicals be in the right, many hundreds of those divines who every Sunday occupy the pulpits of our parish churches must be very much in the wrong.

Now, Sir, I see that many highly respectable persons, who think it a sin to contribute to the teaching of error at Maynooth College, think it not merely lawful, but a sacred duty, to contribute to the teaching of error in the other cases which I have mentioned. They know that our version of the Bible contains some error. Yet they subscribe to the Bible Society. They know that the Serampore translations contain a still greater quantity of error. Yet they give largely towards the printing and circulating of those translations. My honourable friend the Member for the University of Oxford will not deny that there is among the clergy of the Church of England a Puritan party, and also an Antipuritan party, and that one of these parties must teach some error. Yet he is constantly urging us to grant to this Church an additional endowment of I know not how many hundreds of thousands of pounds. He would doubtless defend himself by saying that nothing on earth is perfect; that the purest religious society must consist of human beings, and must have those defects which arise from human infirmities; and that the truths held by the established clergy, though not altogether unalloyed with error, are so precious, that it is better that they should be imparted to the people with the alloy than that they should not be imparted at all. Just so say I. I am sorry that we cannot teach pure truth to the Irish people. But I think it better that they should have important and salutary truth, polluted by some error, than that they should remain altogether uninstructed. I heartily wish that they were Protestants. But I had rather that they should be Roman Catholics than that they should have no religion at all. Would you, says one gentleman, teach the people to worship Jugernaut or Kalee? Certainly not. My argument leads to no such conclusion. The worship of Jugernaut and Kalee is a curse to mankind. It is much better that people should be without any religion than that they should believe in a religion which enjoins prostitution, suicide, robbery, assassination. But will any Protestant deny that it is better that the Irish should be Roman Catholics than that they should live and die like the beasts of the field, indulge their appetites without any religious restraint, suffer want and calamity without any religious consolation, and go to their graves without any religious hope? These considerations entirely satisfy my mind. Of course I would not propagate error for its own sake. To do so would be not merely wicked, but diabolical. But, in order that I may be able to propagate truth, I consent to propagate that portion of error which adheres to truth, and which cannot be separated from truth. I wish Christianity to have a great influence on the peasantry of Ireland. I see no probability that Christianity will have that influence except in one form. That form I consider as very corrupt. Nevertheless, the good seems to me greatly to predominate over the evil; and therefore, being unable to get the good alone, I am content to take the good and the evil together.

I now come to the third class of our opponents. I mean those who take their stand on the voluntary principle. I will not, on this occasion, inquire whether they are right in thinking that governments ought not to contribute to the support of any religion, true or false. For it seems to me that, even if I were to admit that the general rule is correctly laid down by them, the present case would be an exception to that rule. The question on which I am about to vote is not whether the State shall or shall not give any support to religion in Ireland. The State does give such support, and will continue to give such support, whatever may be the issue of this debate. The only point which we have now to decide is whether, while such support is given, it shall be given exclusively to the religion of the minority. Here is an island with a population of near eight millions, and with a wealthy established church, the members of which are little more than eight hundred thousand. There is an archbishop with ten thousand a year. If I recollect rightly, seventy thousand pounds are divided among twelve prelates. At the same time the Protestant dissenters in the north of Ireland receive, in another form, support from the State. But the great majority of the population, the poorest part of the population, the part of the population which is most in need of assistance, the part of the population which holds that faith for the propagation of which the tithes were originally set apart, and the church lands originally given, is left to maintain its own priests. Now is not this a case which stands quite by itself? And may not even those who hold the general proposition, that every man ought to pay his own spiritual pastor, yet vote, without any inconsistency, for this bill? I was astonished to hear the honourable Member for Shrewsbury * tell us that, if we make this grant, it will be impossible for us to resist the claims of any dissenting sect. He particularly mentioned the Wesleyan Methodists. Are the cases analogous? Is there the slightest resemblance between them? Let the honourable gentleman show me that of the sixteen millions of people who inhabit England thirteen millions are Wesleyan Methodists. Let him show me that the members of the Established Church in England are only one tenth of the population. Let him show me that English dissenters who are not Wesleyan Methodists receive a Regium Donum. Let him show me that immense estates bequeathed to John Wesley for the propagation of Methodism have, by Act of Parliament, been taken from the Methodists and given to the Church. If he can show me this, I promise him that, whenever the Wesleyan Methodists shall ask for twenty-six thousand pounds a year to educate their ministers, I shall be prepared to grant their request. But neither the case of the Methodists nor any other case which can be mentioned, resembles the case with which we have to do. Look round Europe, round the world, for a parallel; and you will look in vain. Indeed the state of things which exists in Ireland never could have existed had not Ireland been closely connected with a country, which possessed a great superiority of power, and which abused that superiority. The burden which we are now, I hope, about to lay on ourselves is but a small penalty for a great injustice. Were I a staunch voluntary, I should still feel that, while the church of eight hundred thousand people retains its great endowments, I

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* Mr Disraeli.

should not be justified in refusing this small boon to the church of eight millions.

To sum up shortly what I have said; it is clear to me in the first place that, if we have no religious scruple about granting to this College nine thousand pounds for one year, we ought to have no religious scruple about granting twenty-six thousand pounds a year for an indefinite term.

Secondly, it seems to me that those persons who tell us that we ought never in any circumstances to contribute to the propagation of error do in fact lay down a rule which would altogether interdict the propagation of truth.

Thirdly, it seems to me that, even on the hypothesis that the voluntary principle is the sound principle, the present case is an excepted case, to which it would be unjust and unwise to apply that principle.

So much, Sir, as to this bill; and now let me add a few words about those by whom it has been framed and introduced. We were exhorted, on the first night of this debate, to vote against the bill, without inquiring into its merits, on the ground that, good or bad, it was proposed by men who could not honestly and honourably propose it. A similar appeal has been made to us this evening. In these circumstances, Sir, I must, not I hope from party spirit, not, I am sure, from personal animosity, but from a regard for the public interest, which must be injuriously affected by everything which tends to lower the character of public men, say plainly what I think of the conduct of Her Majesty's Ministers. Undoubtedly it is of the highest importance that we should legislate well. But it is also of the highest importance that those who govern us should have, and should be known to have, fixed principles, and should be guided by those principles both in office and in opposition. It is of the highest importance that the world should not be under the impression that a statesman is a person who, when he is out, will profess and promise anything in order to get in, and who, when he is in, will forget all that he professed and promised when he was out. I need not, I suppose, waste time in proving that a law may be in itself an exceedingly good law, and yet that it may be a law which, when viewed in connection with the former conduct of those who proposed it, may prove them to be undeserving of the confidence of their country. When this is the case, our course is clear. We ought to distinguish between the law and its authors. The law we ought, on account of its intrinsic merits, to support. Of the authors of the law, it may be our duty to speak in terms of censure.

In such terms I feel it to be my duty to speak of Her Majesty's present advisers. I have no personal hostility to any of them; and that political hostility which I do not disavow has never prevented me from doing justice to their abilities and virtues. I have always admitted, and I now most willingly admit, that the right honourable Baronet at the head of the Government possesses many of the qualities of an excellent minister, eminent talents for debate, eminent talents for business, great experience, great information, great skill in the management of this House. I will go further, and say that I give him full credit for a sincere desire to promote the welfare of his country. Nevertheless, it is impossible for me to deny that there is too much ground for the reproaches of those who, having, in spite of a bitter experience, a second time trusted him, now find themselves a second time deluded. I cannot but see that it has been too much his practice, when in opposition, to make use of passions with which he has not the slightest sympathy, and of prejudices which he regards with profound contempt. As soon as he is in power a change takes place. The instruments which have done his work are flung aside. The ladder by which he has climbed is kicked down. I am forced to say that the right honourable Baronet acts thus habitually and on system. The instance before us is not a solitary instance. I do not wish to dwell on the events which took place seventeen or eighteen years ago, on the language which the right honourable Baronet held about the Catholic question when he was out of power in 1827, and on the change which twelve months of power produced. I will only say that one such change was quite enough for one life. Again the right honourable Baronet was in opposition; and again he employed his old tactics. I will not minutely relate the history of the manœuvres by which the Whig Government was overthrown. It is enough to say that many powerful interests were united against that Government under the leading of the right honourable Baronet, and that of those interests there is not one which is not now disappointed and complaining. To confine my remarks to the subject immediately before us—can any man deny that, of all the many cries which were raised against the late administration, that which most strongly stirred the public mind was the cry of No Popery? Is there a single gentleman in the House who doubts that, if, four years ago, my noble friend the Member for the City of London had proposed this bill, he would have been withstood by every member of the present Cabinet? Four years ago, Sir, we were discussing a very different bill. The party which was then in opposition, and which is now in place, was attempting to force through Parliament a law, which bore indeed a specious name, but of which the effect would have been to disfranchise the Roman Catholic electors of Ireland by tens of thousands. It was in vain that we argued. that we protested, that we asked for the delay of a single session, for delay till an inquiry could be made, for delay till a Committee should report. We were told that the case was one of extreme urgency, that every hour was precious, that the House must, without loss of time, be purged of the minions of Popery. These arts succeeded. A change of administration took place. The right honourable Baronet came into power. He has now been near four years in power. He has had a Parliament which would, beyond all doubt, have passed eagerly and gladly that Registration Bill which he and his colleagues had pretended that they thought indispensable to the welfare of the State. And where is that bill now? Flung away; condemned by its own authors; pronounced by them to be so oppressive, so inconsistent with all the principles of representative government, that, though they had vehemently supported it when they were on your left hand, they could not think of proposing it from the Treasury Bench. And what substitute does the honourable Baronet give his followers to console them for the loss of their favourite Registration Bill? Even this bill for the endowment of Maynooth College. Was such a feat of legerdemain ever seen? And can we wonder that the eager, honest, hotheaded Protestants, who raised you to power in the confident hope that you would curtail the privileges of the Roman Catholics, should stare and grumble when you propose to give public money to the Roman Catholics? Can we wonder that, from one end of the country to the other, everything should be ferment and uproar, that petitions should, night after night, whiten all our benches like a snowstorm? Can we wonder that the people out of doors should be exasperated by seeing the very men who, when we were in office, voted against the old grant to Maynooth, now pushed and pulled into the House by your whippers-in to vote for an increased grant? The natural consequences follow. All those fierce spirits, whom you hallooed on to harass us, now turn round and begin to worry you. The Orangeman raises his war-whoop : Exeter Hall sets up its bray : Mr Macneile shudders to see more costly cheer than ever provided for the priests of Baal at the table of the Queen ; and the Protestant Operatives of Dublin call for impeachments in exceedingly bad English. But what did you expect ? Did you think, when, to serve your turn, you called the Devil up, that it was as easy to lay him as to raise him? Did you think, when you went on, session after session, thwarting and reviling those whom you knew to be in the right, and flattering all the worst passions of those whom you knew to be in the wrong, that the day of reckoning would never come? It has come. There you sit, doing penance for the disingenuousness of years. If it be not so, stand up manfully and clear your fame before the House and the country. Show us that some steady principle has guided your conduct with respect to Irish affairs. Show us how, if you are honest in 1845, you can have been honest in 1841. Explain to us why, after having goaded Ireland to madness for the purpose of ingratiating yourselves with the English, you are now setting England on fire for the purpose of ingratiating yourselves with the Irish. Give us some reason which shall prove that the policy which you are following, as Ministers, is entitled to support, and which shall not equally prove you to have been the most factious and unprincipled opposition that ever this country saw.

But, Sir, am I, because I think thus of the conduct of Her Majesty's Ministers, to take the counsel of the honourable member for Shrewsbury and to vote against their bill? Not so. I know well that the fate of this bill and the fate of the administration are in our hands. But far be it from us to imitate the arts by which we were overthrown. The spectacle exhibited on the bench opposite will do quite mischief enough. That mischief will not be lessened, but doubled, if there should be an answering display of inconsistency on this side of the House. If this bill, having been introduced by Tories, shall be rejected by Whigs, both the great parties in the State will be alike discredited. There will be one vast shipwreck of all the public character in the country. Therefore, making up my mind to sacrifices which are not unattended with pain, and repressing some feelings which stir strongly within me, I have determined to give my strenuous support to this bill. Yes, Sir, to this bill, and to every bill which shall seem to me likely to promote the real Union of Great Britain and Ireland, I will give my support, regardless of obloquy, regardless of the risk which I may run of losing my seat in Parliament. For such obloquy I have learned to consider as true glory ; and as to my seat I am determined that it never shall be held by an ignominious tenure ; and I am sure that it can never be lost in a more honourable cause.

A SPEECH

DELIVERED IN THE HOUSE OF COMMONS ON THE 23RD OF APRIL 1845.

On the twenty-third of April 1845, the order of the day for going into Committee on the Maynooth College Bill was read. On the motion that the Speaker should leave the chair, Mr Ward, Member for Sheffield, proposed the following amendment:—

"That it is the opinion of this House that any provision to be made for the purposes of the present Bill ought to be taken from the funds already applicable to ecclesiastical purposes in Ireland."

After a debate of two nights the amendment was rejected by 322 votes to 148. On the first night the following Speech was made.

I WAS desirous, Sir, to catch your eye this evening, because it happens that I have never yet found an opportunity of fully explaining my views on the important subject of the Irish Church. Indeed, I was not in this country when that subject for a time threw every other into the shade, disturbed the whole political world, produced a schism in the Administration of Lord Grey, and overthrew the short Administration of the right honourable Baronet opposite. The motion now before us opens, I conceive, the whole question. My honourable friend the Member for Sheffield, indeed, asks us only to transfer twenty-six thousand pounds a year from the Established Church of Ireland to the College of Maynooth. But this motion, I think, resembles an action of ejectment brought for a single farm, with the view of trying the title to a large estate. Whoever refuses to assent to what is now proposed must be considered as holding the opinion that the property of the Irish Church ought to be held inviolate: and I can scarcely think that any person will vote for what is now proposed, who is not prepared to go very much farther. The point at issue, I take, therefore, to be this; whether the Irish Church, as now constituted, shall be maintained or not?

Now, Sir, when a legislator is called upon to decide whether an institution shall be maintained or not, it seems to me that he ought in the first place to examine whether it be a good or a bad institution. This may sound like a truism; but if I am to judge by the speeches which, on this and former occasions, have been made by gentlemen opposite, it is no truism, but an exceedingly recondite truth. I, Sir, think the Established Church of Ireland a bad institution. I will go farther. I am not speaking in anger, or with any wish to excite anger in others; I am not speaking with rhetorical exaggeration: I am calmly and deliberately expressing, in the only appropriate terms, an opinion which I formed many years ago, which all my observations and reflections have confirmed, and which I am prepared to support by reasons, when I say that, of all the institutions now existing in the civilised world, the Established Church of Ireland seems to me the most absurd.

I cannot help thinking that the speeches of those who defend this Church suffice of themselves to prove that my views are just. For who ever heard anybody defend it on its merits? Has any gentleman to-night defended it on its merits? We are told of the Roman Catholic oath; as if that oath, whatever be its meaning, whatever be the extent of the obligation which it lays on the consciences of those who take it, could possibly prove this Church to be a good thing. We are told that Roman

Catholics of note, both laymen and divines, fifty years ago, declared that, if they were relieved from the disabilities under which they then lay, they should willingly see the Church of Ireland in possession of all its endowments: as if anything that anybody said fifty years ago could absolve us from the plain duty of doing what is now best for the country. We are told of the Fifth Article of Union; as if the Fifth Article of Union were more sacred than the Fourth. Surely, if there be any article of the Union which ought to be regarded as inviolable, it is the Fourth, which settles the number of members whom Great Britain and Ireland respectively are to send to Parliament. Yet the provisions of the Fourth Article have been altered with the almost unanimous assent of all parties in the State. The change was proposed by the noble lord who is now Secretary for the Colonies. It was supported by the right honourable Baronet the Secretary for the Home Department, and by other members of the present Administration. And so far were the opponents of the Reform Bill from objecting to this infraction of the Treaty of Union that they were disposed to go still farther. I well remember the night on which we debated the question, whether Members should be given to Finsbury, Marylebone, Lambeth, and the Tower Hamlets. On that occasion, the Tories attempted to seduce the Irish Reformers from us by promising that Ireland should have a share of the plunder of the metropolitan districts. After this, Sir, I must think it childish in gentlemen opposite to appeal to the Fifth Article of the Union. With still greater surprise, did I hear the right honourable gentleman the Secretary for Ireland say that, if we adopt this amendment, we shall make all landed and funded property insecure. I am really ashamed to answer such an argument. Nobody proposes to touch any vested interest; and surely it cannot be necessary for me to point out to the right honourable gentleman the distinction between property in which some person has a vested interest, and property in which no person has a vested interest. That distinction is part of the very rudiments of political science. Then the right honourable gentleman quarrels with the form of the amendment. Why, Sir, perhaps a more convenient form might have been adopted. But is it by cavils like these that a great institution should be defended? And who ever heard the Established Church of Ireland defended except by cavils like these? Who ever heard any of her advocates speak a manly and statesmanlike language? Who ever heard any of her advocates say, "I defend this institution because it is a good institution: the ends for which an Established Church exists are such and such: and I will show you that this Church attains those ends?" Nobody says this. Nobody has the hardihood to say it. What divine, what political speculator who has written in defence of ecclesiastical establishments, ever defended such establishments on grounds which will support the Church of Ireland? What panegyric has ever been pronounced on the Churches of England and Scotland, which is not a satire on the Church of Ireland? What traveller comes among us who is not moved to wonder and derision by the Church of Ireland? What foreign writer on British affairs, whether European or American, whether Protestant or Catholic, whether Conservative or Liberal, whether partial to England or prejudiced against England, ever mentions the Church of Ireland without expressing his amazement that such an establishment should exist among reasonable men?

And those who speak thus of this Church speak justly. Is there anything else like it? Was there ever anything else like it? The world is full of ecclesiastical establishments: but such a portent as this Church of

Ireland is nowhere to be found. Look round the Continent of Europe. Ecclesiastical establishments from the White Sea to the Mediterranean: ecclesiastical establishments from the Wolga to the Atlantic: but nowhere the Church of a small minority enjoying exclusive establishment. Look at America. There you have all forms of Christianity, from Mormonism, if you call Mormonism Christianity, to Romanism. In some places you have the voluntary system. In some you have several religions connected with the state. In some you have the solitary ascendency of a single Church. But nowhere, from the Arctic Circle to Cape Horn, do you find the Church of a small minority exclusively established. Look round our own empire. We have an Established Church in England; it is the Church of the majority. There is an Established Church in Scotland. When it was set up, it was the Church of the majority. A few months ago, it was the Church of the majority. I am not quite sure that, even after the late unhappy disruption, it is the Church of the minority. In our colonies the State does much for the support of religion; but in no colony, I believe, do we give exclusive support to the religion of the minority. Nay, even in those parts of the empire where the great body of the population is attached to absurd and immoral superstitions, you have not been guilty of the folly and injustice of calling on them to pay for a Church which they do not want. We have not portioned out Bengal and the Carnatic into parishes, and scattered Christian rectors, with stipends and glebes, among millions of Pagans and Mahometans. We keep, indeed, a small Christian establishment, or rather three small Christian establishments, Anglican, Presbyterian, and Catholic. But we keep them only for the Christians in our civil and military services; and we leave untouched the revenues of the mosques and temples. In one country alone is to be seen the spectacle of a community of eight millions of human beings, with a Church which is the Church of only eight hundred thousand.

It has been often said, and has been repeated to-night by the honourable Member for Radnor, that this Church, though it includes only a tenth part of the population, has more than half the wealth of Ireland. But is that an argument in favour of the present system? Is it not the strongest argument that can be urged in favour of an entire change? It is true that there are many cases in which it is fit that property should prevail over number. Those cases may, I think, be all arranged in two classes. One class consists of those cases in which the preservation or improvement of property is the object in view. Thus, in a railway company, nothing can be more reasonable than that one proprietor who holds five hundred shares should have more power than five proprietors who hold one share each. The other class of cases in which property may justly confer privileges is where superior intelligence is required. Property is indeed but a very imperfect test of intelligence. But, when we are legislating on a large scale, it is perhaps the best which we can apply. For where there is no property, there can very seldom be any mental cultivation. It is on this principle that special jurors, who have to try causes of peculiar nicety, are taken from a wealthier order than that which furnishes common jurors. But there cannot be a more false analogy than to reason from these cases to the case of an Established Church. So far is it from being true that, in establishing a Church, we ought to pay more regard to one rich man than to five poor men, that the direct reverse is the sound rule. We ought to pay more regard to one poor man than to five rich men. For, in the first place, the public ordinances of religion are of far more importance to the poor man than to the rich man. I do not mean to say that a rich man may not be the better for hearing sermons and joining in public prayers. But these things are not indispensable to him; and, if he is so situated that he cannot have them, he may find substitutes. He has money to buy books, time to study them, understanding to comprehend them. Every day he may commune with the minds of Hooker, Leighton, and Barrow. He therefore stands less in need of the oral instruction of a divine than a peasant who cannot read, or who, if he can read, has no money to procure books, or leisure to peruse them. Such a peasant, unless instructed by word of mouth, can know no more of Christianity than a wild Hottentot. Nor is this all. The poor man not only needs the help of a minister of religion more than the rich man, but is also less able to procure it. If there were no Established Church, people in our rank of life would always be provided with preachers to their mind at an expense which they would scarcely feel. But when a poor man, who can hardly give his children their fill of potatoes, has to sell his pig in order to pay something to his priest, the burden is a heavy one. This is, in fact, the strongest reason for having an established church in any country. It is the one reason which prevents me from joining with the partisans of the voluntary system. I should think their arguments unanswerable if the question regarded the upper and middle classes only. If I would keep up the Established Church of England, it is not for the sake of lords, and baronets, and country gentlemen of five thousand pounds a-year, and rich bankers in the city. I know that such people will always have churches, aye, and cathedrals, and organs, and rich communion plate. The person about whom I am uneasy is the working man; the man who would find it difficult to pay even five shillings or ten shillings a-year out of his small earnings for the ministrations of religion. What is to become of him under the voluntary system? Is he to go without religious instruction altogether? That we should all think a great evil to himself, and a great evil to society. Is he to pay for it out of his slender means? That would be a heavy tax. Is he to be dependent on the liberality of others? That is a somewhat precarious and a somewhat humiliating dependence. I prefer, I own, that system under which there is, in the rudest and most secluded district, a house of God, where public worship is performed after a fashion acceptable to the great majority of the community, and where the poorest may partake of the ordinances of religion, not as an alms, but as a right. But does this argument apply to a Church like the Church of Ireland? It is not necessary on this occasion to decide whether the arguments in favour of ecclesiastical establishments, or the arguments in favour of the voluntary system, be the stronger. There are weighty considerations on both sides. Balancing them as well as I can, I think that, as respects England, the preponderance is on the side of the Establishment. But, as respects Ireland, there is no balancing. All the weights are in one scale. All the arguments which incline us against the Church of England, and all the arguments which incline us in favour of the Church of England, are alike arguments against the Church of Ireland; against the Church of the few; against the Church of the wealthy; against the Church which, reversing every principle on which a Christian Church should be founded, fills the rich with its good things, and sends the hungry empty away.

One view which has repeatedly, both in this House and out of it, been taken of the Church of Ireland, seems to deserve notice. It is admitted, as indeed it could not well be denied, that this Church does not perform the functions which are everywhere else expected from similar institutions; that it does not instruct the body of the people; that it does not administer religious consolation to the body of the people. But, it is said, we must regard this Church as an aggressive Church, a proselytising Church, a Church militant among spiritual enemies. Its office is to spread Protestantism over Munster and Connaught. I remember well that, eleven years ago, when Lord Grey's Government proposed to reduce the number of Irish bishoprics, this language was held. It was acknowledged that there were more bishops than the number of persons then in communion with the Established Church required. But that number, we were assured, would not be stationary; and the hierarchy, therefore, ought to be constituted with a view to the millions of converts who would soon require the care of Protestant pastors. I well remember the strong expression which was then used by my honourable friend, the Member for the University of Oxford. We must, he said, make allowance for the expansive force of Protestantism. A few nights ago a noble lord for whom I, in common with the whole House, feel the greatest respect, the Member for Dorsetshire,* spoke of the missionary character of the Church of Ireland. Now, Sir, if such language had been held at the Council Board of Queen Elizabeth when the constitution of this Church was first debated there, there would have been no cause for wonder. Sir William Cecil or Sir Nicholas Bacon might very naturally have said, "There are few Protestants now in Ireland, it is true. But when we consider how rapidly the Protestant theology has spread, when we remember that it is little more than forty years since Martin Luther began to preach against indulgences, and when we see that one half of Europe is now emancipated from the old superstition, we may reasonably expect that the Irish will soon follow the example of the other nations which have embraced the doctrines of the Reformation." Cecil, I say, and his colleagues might naturally entertain this expectation, and might without absurdity make preparations for an event which they regarded as in the highest degree probable. But we, who have seen this system in full operation from the year 1560 to the year 1845, ought to have been taught better, unless indeed we are past all teaching. Two hundred and eighty-five years has this Church been at work. What could have been done for it in the way of authority, privileges, endowments, which has not been done? Did any other set of bishops and priests in the world ever receive so much for doing so little? Nay, did any other set of bishops and priests in the world ever receive half as much for doing twice as much? And what have we to show for all this lavish expenditure? What but the most zealous Roman Catholic population on the face of the earth? Where you were one hundred years ago, where you were two hundred years ago, there you are still, not victorious over the domain of the old faith, but painfully and with dubious success defending your own frontier, your own English pale. Sometimes a deserter leaves you. Sometimes a deserter steals over to you. Whether your gains or losses of this sort be the greater I do not know; nor is it worth while to inquire. On the great solid mass of the Roman Catholic population you have made no impression whatever. There they are, as they were ages ago, ten to one against the members of your Established Church. Explain this to me. I speak to you, the zealous Protestants on the other side of the House. Explain this to me on Protestant principles. If I were a Roman Catholic, I could easily account for the phenomena. If I were a Roman Catholic, I should content myself with saying that the mighty hand and the outstretched arm had been put forth, according to the promise, in defence of the unchangeable Church; that He who in the old time turned into blessings the curses of Balaam, and smote the host of Sennacherib, had signally confounded the arts of heretic statesmen. But what is a Protestant to say? He holds that, through the whole of this long conflict, during which ten generations of men have been born and have died, reason and Scripture have been on the side of the Established Clergy. Tell us then what we are to say of this strange war, in which, reason and Scripture backed by wealth, by dignity, by the help of the civil power, have been found no match for oppressed and destitute error? The fuller our conviction that our doctrines are right, the fuller, if we are rational men, must be our conviction that our tactics have been wrong, and that we have been encumbering the cause which we meant to aid.

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* Lord Ashley.

Observe, it is not only the comparative number of Roman Catholics and Protestants that may justly furnish us with matter for serious reflection. The quality as well as the quantity of Irish Romanism deserves to be considered. Is there any other country inhabited by a mixed population of Catholics and Protestants, any other country in which Protestant doctrines have long been freely promulgated from the press and from the pulpit, where the Roman Catholic spirit is so strong as in Ireland? I believe not. The Belgians are generally considered as very stubborn and zealous Roman Catholics. But I do not believe that either in stubbornness or in zeal they equal the Irish. And this is the fruit of three centuries of Protestant archbishops, bishops, archdeacons, deans, and rectors. And yet where is the wonder? Is this a miracle that we should stand aghast at it? Not at all. It is a result which human prudence ought to have long ago foreseen and long ago averted. It is the natural succession of effect to cause. If you do not understand it, it is because you do not understand what the nature and operation of a church is. There are parts of the machinery of Government which may be just as efficient when they are hated as when they are loved. An army, a navy, a preventive service, a police force, may do their work whether the public feeling be with them or against them. Whether we dislike the corn laws or not, your custom houses and your coast guard keep out foreign corn. The multitude at Manchester was not the less effectually dispersed by the yeomanry, because the interference of the yeomanry excited the bitterest indignation. There the object was to produce a material effect; the material means were sufficient; and nothing more was required. But a Church exists for moral ends. A Church exists to be loved, to be reverenced, to be heard with docility, to reign in the understandings and hearts of men. A Church which is abhorred is useless or worse than useless; and to quarter a hostile Church on a conquered people, as you would quarter a soldiery, is therefore the most absurd of mistakes. This mistake our ancestors committed. They posted a Church in Ireland just as they posted garrisons in Ireland. The garrisons did their work. They were disliked. But that mattered not. They had their forts and their arms; and they kept down the aboriginal race. But the Church did not do its work. For to that work the love and confidence of the people were essential.

I may remark in passing that, even under more favourable circumstances a parochial priesthood is not a good engine for the purpose of making proselytes. The Church of Rome, whatever we may think of her ends, has shown no want of sagacity in the choice of means; and she knows this well. When she makes a great aggressive movement,—and many such movements she has made with signal success,—she employs, not her parochial clergy, but a very different machinery. The business of her parish priests is to defend and govern what has been won. It is by the religious orders, and especially by the Jesuits, that the great acquisitions have been made. In Ireland your parochial clergy lay under two great disadvantages. They were endowed, and they were hated: so richly endowed that few among them cared to turn missionaries; so bitterly hated that those few had but little success. They long contented themselves with receiving the emoluments arising from their benefices, and neglected those means to which, in other parts of Europe, Protestantism had owed its victory. It is well known that of all the instruments employed by the Reformers of Germany, of England, and of Scotland, for the purpose of moving the public mind, the most powerful was the Bible translated into the vernacular tongues. In Ireland the Protestant Church had been established near half a century before the New Testament was printed in Erse. The whole Bible was not printed in Erse till this Church had existed more than one hundred and twenty years. Nor did the publication at last take place under the patonage of the lazy and wealthy hierarchy. The expense was defrayed by a layman, the illustrious Robert Boyle. So things went on century after century. Swift, more than a hundred years ago, described the prelates of his country as men gorged with wealth and sunk in indolence, whose chief business was to bow and job at the Castle. The only spiritual function, he says, which they performed was ordination; and, when he saw what persons they ordained, he doubted whether it would not be better that they should neglect that function as they neglected every other. Those, Sir, are now living who can well remember how the revenues of the richest see in Ireland were squandered on the shores of the Mediterranean by a bishop, whose epistles, very different compositions from the epistles of Saint Peter and Saint John, may be found in the correspondence of Lady Hamilton. Such abuses as these called forth no complaint, no reprimand. And all this time the true pastors of the people, meanly fed and meanly clothed, frowned upon by the law, exposed to the insults of every petty squire who gloried in the name of Protestant, were to be found in miserable cabins, amidst filth, and famine, and contagion, instructing the young, consoling the miserable, holding up the crucifix before the eyes of the dying. Is it strange that, in such circumstances, the Roman Catholic religion should have been constantly becoming dearer and dearer to an ardent and sensitive people, and that your Established Church should have been constantly sinking lower and lower in their estimation? I do not of course hold the living clergy of the Irish Church answerable for the faults of their predecessors. God forbid! To do so would be the most flagitious injustice. I know that a salutary change has taken place. I have no reason to doubt that in learning and regularity of life the Protestant clergy of Ireland are on a level with the clergy of England. But in the way of making proselytes they do as little as those who preceded them. An enmity of three hundred years separates the nation from those who should be its teachers. In short, it is plain that the mind of Ireland has taken its ply, and is not to be bent in a different direction, or, at all events, is not to be so bent by your present machinery.

Well, then, this Church is inefficient as a missionary Church. But there is yet another end which, in the opinion of some eminent men, a Church is meant to serve. That end has been often in the minds of practical politicians. But the first speculative politician who distinctly pointed it out was Mr Hume. Mr Hume, as might have been expected from his known opinions, treated the question merely as it related to the temporal happiness of mankind; and, perhaps, it may be doubted whether he took quite a just view of the manner in which even the temporal happiness of mankind is affected by the restraints and consolations of religion. He reasoned thus :—It is dangerous to the peace of society that the public mind should be violently excited on religious subjects. If you adopt the voluntary system, the public mind will always be so excited. For every preacher, knowing that his bread depends on his popularity, seasons his doctrine high, and practises every art for the purpose of obtaining an ascendency over his hearers. But when the Government pays the minister of religion, he has no pressing motive to inflame the zeal of his congregation. He will probably go through his duties in a somewhat perfunctory manner. His power will not be very formidable; and, such as it is, it will be employed in support of that order of things under which he finds himself so comfortable. Now, Sir, it is not necessary to inquire whether Mr Hume's doctrine be sound or unsound. For, sound or unsound, it furnishes no ground on which you can rest the defence of the institution which we are now considering. It is evident that by establishing in Ireland the Church of the minority in connection with the State, you have produced, in the very highest degree, all those evils which Mr Hume considered as inseparable from the voluntary system. You may go all over the world without finding another country where religious differences take a form so dangerous to the peace of society; where the common people are so much under the influence of their priests; or where the priests who teach the common people are so completely estranged from the civil Government.

And now, Sir, I will sum up what I have said. For what end does the Church of Ireland exist? Is that end the instruction and solace of the great body of the people? You must admit that the Church of Ireland has not attained that end. Is the end which you have in view the conversion of the great body of the people from the Roman Catholic religion to a purer form of Christianity? You must admit that the Church of Ireland has not attained that end. Or do you propose to yourselves the end contemplated by Mr Hume, the peace and security of civil society? You must admit that the Church of Ireland has not attained that end. In the name of common sense, then, tell us what good end this Church has attained; or suffer us to conclude, as I am forced to conclude, that it is emphatically a bad institution.

It does not, I know, necessarily follow that, because an institution is bad, it is therefore to be immediately destroyed. Sometimes a bad institution takes a strong hold on the hearts of mankind, intertwines its roots with the very foundations of society, and is not to be removed without serious peril to order, law, and property. For example, I hold polygamy to be one of the most pernicious practices that exist in the world. But if the Legislative Council of India were to pass an Act prohibiting polygamy, I should think that they were out of their senses. Such a measure would bring down the vast fabric of our Indian Empire with one crash. But is there any similar reason for dealing tenderly with the Established Church of Ireland? That Church, Sir, is not one of those bad institutions which ought to be spared because they are popular, and because their fall would injure good institutions. It is, on the contrary, so odious, and its vicinage so much endangers valuable parts of our polity, that, even if it were in itself a good institution, there would be strong reasons for giving it up.

The honourable gentleman who spoke last told us that we cannot touch this Church without endangering the Legislative Union. Sir, I have given my best attention to this important point ; and I have arrived at a very different conclusion. The question to be determined is this :—What is the best way of preserving political union between countries in which different religions prevail? With respect to this question we have, I think, all the light which history can give us. There is no sort of experiment described by Lord Bacon which we have not tried. Inductive philosophy is of no value if we cannot trust to the lessons derived from the experience of more than two hundred years. England has long been closely connected with two countries less powerful than herself, and differing from herself in religion. The Scottish people are Presbyterians ; the Irish people are Roman Catholics. We determined to force the Anglican system on both countries. In both countries great discontent was the result. At length Scotland rebelled. Then Ireland rebelled. The Scotch and Irish rebellions, taking place at a time when the public mind of England was greatly and justly excited, produced the Great Rebellion here, and the downfall of the Monarchy, of the Church, and of the Aristocracy. After the Restoration we again tried the old system. During twenty-eight years we persisted in the attempt to force Prelacy on the Scotch ; and the consequence was, during those twenty-eight years Scotland exhibited a frightful spectacle of misery and depravity. The history of that period is made up of oppression and resistance, of insurrections, barbarous punishments, and assassinations. One day a crowd of zealous rustics stand desperately on their defence, and repel the dragoons. Next day the dragoons scatter and hew down the flying peasantry. One day the kneebones of a wretched Covenanter are beaten flat in that accursed boot. Next day the Lord Primate is dragged out of his carriage by a band of raving fanatics, and, while screaming for mercy, is butchered at the feet of his own daughter. So things went on, till at last we remembered that institutions are made for men, and not men for institutions. A wise Government desisted from the vain attempt to maintain an Episcopal Establishment in a Presbyterian nation. From that moment the connection between England and Scotland became every year closer and closer. There were still, it is true, many causes of animosity. There was an old antipathy between the nations, the effect of many blows given and received on both sides. All the greatest calamities that had befallen Scotland had been inflicted by England. The proudest events in Scottish history were victories obtained over England. Yet all angry feelings died rapidly away. The union of the nations became complete. The oldest man living does not remember to have heard any demagogue breathe a wish for separation. Do you believe that this would have happened if England had, after the Revolution, persisted in attempting to force the surplice and the Prayer Book on the Scotch? I tell you that, if you had adhered to the mad scheme of having a religious union with Scotland, you never would have had a cordial political union with her. At this very day you would have had monster meetings on the north of the Tweed, and another Conciliation Hall, and another repeal button, with the motto, "Nemo me impune lacessit." In fact, England never would have become the great power that she is. For Scotland would have been, not an addition to the effective strength of the Empire, but a deduction from it. As often as there was a war with France or Spain, there would have been an insurrection in Scotland. Our country would have sunk into a kingdom of the second class. One such Church as that about which we are now debating is a serious encumbrance to the greatest empire. Two such Churches no empire could bear. You continued to govern Ireland during many generations as you had governed Scotland in the days of Lauderdale and Dundee. And see the result. Ireland has remained, indeed, a part of your Empire. But you know her to be a source of weakness rather than of strength. Her misery is a reproach to you. Her discontent doubles the dangers of war. Can you, with such facts before you, doubt about the course which you ought to take? Imagine a physician with two patients, both afflicted with the same disease. He applies the same sharp remedies to both. Both become worse and worse with the same inflammatory symptoms. Then he changes his treatment of one case, and gives soothing medicines. The sufferer revives, grows better day by day, and is at length restored to perfect health. The other patient is still subjected to the old treatment, and becomes constantly more and more disordered. How would a physician act in such a case? And are not the principles of experimental philosophy the same in politics as in medicine?

Therefore, Sir, I am fully prepared to take strong measures with regard to the Established Church of Ireland. It is not necessary for me to say precisely how far I would go. I am aware that it may be necessary, in this as in other cases, to consent to a compromise. But the more complete the reform which may be proposed, provided always that vested rights be, as I am sure they will be, held strictly sacred, the more cordially shall I support it.

That some reform is at hand I cannot doubt. In a very short time we shall see the evils which I have described mitigated, if not entirely removed. A Liberal Administration would make this concession to Ireland from a sense of justice. A Conservative Administration will make it from a sense of danger. The right honourable Baronet has given the Irish a lesson which will bear fruit. It is a lesson which rulers ought to be slow to teach; for it is one which nations are but too apt to learn. We have repeatedly been told by acts—we are now told almost in express words—that agitation and intimidation are the means which ought to be employed by those who wish for redress of grievances from the party now in power. Such indeed has too long been the policy of England towards Ireland; but it was surely never before avowed with such indiscreet frankness. Every epoch which is remembered with pleasure on the other side of St George's Channel coincides with some epoch which we here consider as disastrous and perilous. To the American war and the volunteers the Irish Parliament owed its independence. To the French revolutionary war the Irish Roman Catholics owed the elective franchise. It was in vain that all the great orators and statesmen of two generations exerted themselves to remove the Roman Catholic disabilities, Burke, Fox, Pitt, Windham, Grenville, Grey, Plunkett, Wellesley, Grattan, Canning, Wilberforce. Argument and expostulation were fruitless. At length pressure of a stronger kind was boldly and skilfully applied; and soon all difficulties gave way. The Catholic Association, the Clare election, the dread of civil war, produced the Emancipation Act. Again, the cry of No Popery was raised. That cry was successful. A faction which had reviled in the bitterest terms the mild administration of Whig Viceroys, and which was pledged to the wholesale disfranchisement of the Roman Catholics, rose to power. One leading member of that faction had drawn forth loud cheers by declaiming against the minions of Popery. Another had designated six millions of Irish Catholics as aliens. A third had publicly declared his conviction, that a time was at hand when all Protestants of every persuasion would find it necessary to combine firmly against the encroachments of Romanism. From such men we expected nothing but oppression and intolerance. We are agreeably disappointed to find that a series of conciliatory bills is brought before us. But, in the midst of our delight, we cannot refrain from asking for some explanation of so extraordinary a change. We are told in reply, that the monster meetings of 1843 were very formidable, and that our relations with America are in a very unsatisfactory state. The public opinion of Ireland is to be consulted, the religion of Ireland is to be treated with respect, not because equity and humanity plainly enjoin that course; for equity and humanity enjoined that course as plainly when you were calumniating Lord Normanby, and hurrying forward your Registration Bill; but because Mr O'Connell and Mr Polk have between them made you very uneasy. Sir, it is with shame, with sorrow, and, I will add, with dismay, that I listen to such language. I have hitherto disapproved of the monster meetings of 1843. I have disapproved of the way in which Mr O'Connell and some other Irish representatives have seceded from this House. I should not have chosen to apply to those gentlemen the precise words which were used on a former occasion by the honourable and learned Member for Bath. But I agreed with him in substance. I thought it highly to the honour of my right honourable friend the Member for Dungarvon, and of my honourable friends the Members for Kildare, for Roscommon, and for the city of Waterford, that they had the moral courage to attend the service of this House, and to give us the very valuable assistance which they are, in various ways, so well qualified to afford. But what am I to say now? How can I any longer deny that the place where an Irish gentleman may best serve his country is Conciliation Hall? How can I expect that any Irish Roman Catholic can be very sorry to learn that our foreign relations are in an alarming state, or can rejoice to hear that all danger of war has blown over? I appeal to the Conservative Members of this House. I ask them whither we are hastening? I ask them what is to be the end of a policy of which it is the principle to give nothing to justice, and everything to fear? We have been accused of truckling to Irish agitators. But I defy you to show us that we ever made or are now making to Ireland a single concession which was not in strict conformity with our known principles. You may therefore trust us, when we tell you that there is a point where we will stop. Our language to the Irish is this:—"You ask for emancipation: it was agreeable to our principles that you should have it; and we assisted you to obtain it. You wished for a municipal system, as popular as that which exists in England: we thought your wish reasonable, and did all in our power to gratify it. This grant to Maynooth is, in our opinion, proper; and we will do our best to obtain it for you, though it should cost us our popularity and our seats in Parliament. The Established Church in your island, as now constituted, is a grievance of which you justly complain. We will strive to redress that grievance. The Repeal of the Union we regard as fatal to the empire: and we never will consent to it; never, though the country should be surrounded by dangers as great as those which threatened her when her American colonies, and France, and Spain, and Holland, were leagued against her, and when the armed neutrality of the Baltic disputed her maritime rights; never, though another Bonaparte should pitch his camp in sight of Dover Castle; never, till all has been staked and lost; never, till the four quarters of the world have been convulsed by the last struggle of the great English people for their place among the nations." This, Sir, is the true policy. When you give, give frankly. When you withhold, withhold resolutely. Then what you give is received with gratitude; and, as for what you withhold, men, seeing that to wrest it from you is no safe or easy enterprise, cease to hope for it, and, in time, cease to wish for it. But there is a way of so withholding as merely to excite desire, and of so giving as merely to excite contempt; and that way the present ministry has discovered. Is it possible for me to doubt that in a few months the same machinery which sixteen years ago extorted from the men now in power the Emancipation Act, and which has now extorted from them the bill before us, will again be put in motion? Who shall say what will be the next sacrifice? For my own part I firmly believe that, if the present Ministers remain in power five years longer, and if we should have,—which God avert!—a war with France or America, the Established Church of Ireland will be given up. The right honourable Baronet will come down to make a proposition conceived in the very spirit of the Motions which have repeatedly been made by my honourable friend the Member for Sheffield. He will again be deserted by his followers; he will again be dragged through his difficulties by his opponents. Some honest Lord of the Treasury may determine to quit his office rather than belie all the professions of a life. But there will be little difficulty in finding a successor ready to change all his opinions at twelve hours' notice. I may perhaps, while cordially supporting the bill, again venture to say something about consistency, and about the importance of maintaining a high standard of political morality. The right honourable Baronet will again tell me, that he is anxious only for the success of his measure, and that he does not choose to reply to taunts. And the right honourable gentleman the Chancellor of the Exchequer will produce Hansard, will read to the House my speech of this night, and will most logically argue that I ought not to reproach the Ministers with their inconsistency, seeing that I had, from my knowledge of their temper and principles, predicted to a tittle the nature and extent of that inconsistency.

Sir, I have thought it my duty to brand with strong terms of reprehension the practice of conceding, in time of public danger, what is obstinately withheld in time of public tranquillity. I am prepared, and have long been prepared, to grant much, very much, to Ireland. But if the Repeal Association were to dissolve itself to-morrow, and if the next steamer were to bring news that all our differences with the United States were adjusted in the most honourable and friendly manner, I would grant to Ireland neither more nor less than I would grant if we were on the eve of a rebellion like that of 1798; if war were raging all along the Canadian frontier; and if thirty French sail of the line were confronting our fleet in St George's Channel. I give my vote from my heart and soul for the amendment of my honourable friend. He calls on us to make to Ireland a concession, which ought in justice to have been made long ago, and which may be made with grace and dignity even now. I well know that you will refuse to make it now. I know as well that you will make it hereafter. You will make it as every concession to Ireland has been made. You will make it when its effect will be, not to appease, but to stimulate agitation. You will make it when it will be regarded, not as a great act of national justice, but as a confession of national weakness. You will make it in such a way, and at such a time, that there will be but too much reason to doubt whether more mischief has been done by your long refusal, or by your tardy and enforced compliance.

A SPEECH

DELIVERED IN THE HOUSE OF COMMONS ON THE 9TH OF JULY 1845.

On the first of May, 1845, Mr Rutherfurd, Member for Leith, obtained leave to bring in a bill to regulate admission to the Secular Chairs in the Universities of Scotland. On the morning of the sixth of May the bill was read a first time, and remained two months on the table of the House. At length the second reading was fixed for the ninth of July. Mr Rutherfurd was unable to attend on that day: and it was necessary that one of his friends should supply his place. Accordingly, as soon as the Order of the Day had been read, the following Speech was made

On a division the bill was rejected by 116 votes to 108. But, in the state in which parties then were, this defeat was generally considered as a victory.

MR SPEAKER,—I have been requested by my honourable and learned friend, the Member for Leith, to act as his substitute on this occasion. I am truly sorry that any substitute should be necessary. I am truly sorry that he is not among us to take charge of the bill which he not long ago introduced with one of the most forcible and luminous speeches that I ever had the pleasure of hearing. His audience was small; but the few who formed that audience cannot have forgotten the effect which his arguments and his eloquence produced. The Ministers had come down to resist his motion: but their courage failed them: they hesitated: they conferred together: at last they consented that he should have leave to bring in his bill. Such, indeed, was the language which they held on that and on a subsequent occasion, that both my honourable and learned friend and myself gave them more credit than they deserved. We really believed that they had resolved to offer no opposition to a law which it was quite evident that they perceived to be just and beneficial. But we have been disappointed. It has been notified to us that the whole influence of the Government is to be exerted against our bill. In such discouraging circumstances it is that I rise to move the second reading.

Yet, Sir, I do not altogether despair of success. When I consider what strong, what irresistible reasons we have to urge, I can hardly think it possible that the mandate of the most powerful administration can prevail against them. Nay, I should consider victory, not merely as probable, but as certain, if I did not know how imperfect is the information which English gentlemen generally possess concerning Scotch questions. It is because I know this that I think it my duty to depart from the ordinary practice, and, instead of simply moving the second reading, to explain at some length the principles on which this bill has been framed. I earnestly entreat those English Members who were not so fortunate as to hear the speech of my honourable and learned friend, the Member for Leith to favour me with their attention. They will, I think, admit, that

I have a right to be heard with indulgence. I have been sent to this house by a great city which was once a capital, the abode of a Sovereign, the place where the Estates of a realm held their sittings. For the general good of the empire, Edinburgh descended from that high eminence. But, ceasing to be a political metropolis, she became an intellectual metropolis. For the loss of a Court, of a Privy Council, of a Parliament, she found compensation in the prosperity and splendour of an University renowned to the farthest ends of the earth as a school of physical and moral science. This noble and beneficent institution is now threatened with ruin by the folly of the Government, and by the violence of an ecclesiastical faction which is bent on persecution without having the miserable excuse of fanaticism. Nor is it only the University of Edinburgh that is in danger. In pleading for that University, I plead for all the great academical institutions of Scotland. The fate of all depends on the event of this debate; and, in the name of all, I demand the attention of every man who loves either learning or religious liberty.

The first question which we have to consider is, whether the principles of the bill be sound. I believe that they are sound; and I am quite confident that nobody who sits on the Treasury Bench will venture to pronounce them unsound. It does not lie in the mouths of the Ministers to say that literary instruction and scientific instruction are inseparably connected with religious instruction. It is not for them to rail against Godless Colleges. It is not for them to talk with horror of the danger of suffering young men to listen to the lectures of an Arian professor of Botany or of a Popish professor of Chemistry. They are themselves at this moment setting up in Ireland a system exactly resembling the system which we wish to set up in Scotland. Only a few hours have elapsed since they were themselves labouring to prove that, in a country in which a large proportion of those who require a liberal education are dissenters from the Established Church, it is desirable that there should be schools without theological tests. The right honourable Baronet at the head of the Government proposes that in the new colleges which he is establishing at Belfast, Cork, Limerick, and Galway, the professorships shall be open to men of every creed: and he has strenuously defended that part of his plan against attacks from opposite quarters, against the attacks of zealous members of the Church of England, and of zealous members of the Church of Rome. Only the day before yesterday the honourable Baronet the Member for North Devon* ventured to suggest a test as unobjectionable as a test could well be. He would merely have required the professors to declare their general belief in the divine authority of the Old and New Testaments. But even this amendment the First Lord of the Treasury resisted, and I think quite rightly. He told us that it was quite unnecessary to institute an inquisition into the religious opinions of people whose business was merely to teach secular knowledge, and that it was absurd to imagine that any man of learning would disgrace and ruin himself by preaching infidelity from the Greek chair or the Mathematical chair.

Some members of this House certainly held very different language: but their arguments made as little impression on Her Majesty's Ministers as on me. We were told with the utmost earnestness that secular knowledge, unaccompanied by a sound religious faith, and unsanctified by religious feeling, was not only useless, but positively noxious, a curse to the possessor, a curse to society. I feel the greatest personal kindness and respect for some gentlemen who hold this language. But they must pardon me if I say that the proposition which they have so confidently laid down, however well it may sound in pious ears while it is expressed in general terms, will appear, as soon as it is applied to the real concerns of life, to be too monstrous, too ludicrous, for grave refutation. Is it seriously meant that, if the Captain of an Indiaman is a Socinian, it would be better for himself, his crew, and his passengers, that he should not know how to use his quadrant and his chronometers? Is it seriously meant that, if a druggist is a Swedenborgian, it would be better for himself and his customers that he should not know the difference between Epsom salts and oxalic acid? A hundred millions of the Queen's Asiatic subjects are Mahometans and Pagans. Is it seriously meant that it is desirable that they should be as ignorant as the aboriginal inhabitants of New South Wales, that they should have no alphabet, that they should have no arithmetic, that they should not know how to build a bridge, how to sink a well, how to irrigate a field? If it be true that secular knowledge, unsanctified by true religion, is a positive evil, all these consequences follow. Yet surely they are consequences from which every sane mind must recoil. It is a great evil, no doubt, that a man should be a heretic or an atheist. But I am quite at a loss to understand how this evil is mitigated by his not knowing that the earth moves round the sun, that by the help of a lever, a small power will lift a great weight, that Virginia is a republic, or that Paris is the capital of France.

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* Sir Thomas Acland.

On these grounds, Sir, I have cordially supported the Irish Colleges Bill. But the principle of the Irish Colleges and the principle of the bill which I hold in my hand are exactly the same: and the House and the country have a right to know why the authors of the former bill are the opponents of the latter bill. One distinction there is, I admit, between Ireland and Scotland. It is true that in Scotland there is no clamour against the Union with England. It is true that in Scotland no demagogue can obtain applause and riches by slandering and reviling the English people. It is true that in Scotland there is no traitor who would dare to say that he regards the enemies of the state as his allies. In every extremity the Scottish nation will be found faithful to the common cause of the empire. But Her Majesty's Ministers will hardly, I think, venture to say that this is their reason for refusing to Scotland the boon which they propose to confer on Ireland. And yet, if this be not their reason, what reason can we find? Observe how strictly analogous the cases are. You give it as a reason for establishing in Ireland colleges without tests that the Established Church of Ireland is the Church of the minority. Unhappily it may well be doubted whether the Established Church of Scotland, too, be not now, thanks to your policy, the Church of the minority. It is true that the members of the Established Church of Scotland are about a half of the whole population of Scotland; and that the members of the Established Church of Ireland are not much more than a tenth of the whole population of Ireland. But the question now before us does not concern the whole population. It concerns only the class which requires academical education: and I do not hesitate to say that, in the class which requires academical education, in the class for the sake of which universities exist, the proportion of persons who do not belong to the Established Church is as great in Scotland as in Ireland. You tell us that sectarian education in Ireland is an evil. Is it less an evil in Scotland? You tell us that it is desirable that the Protestant and the Roman

Catholic should study together at Cork. Is it less desirable that the son of an elder of the Established Church and the son of an elder of the Free Church should study together at Edinburgh? You tell us that it is not reasonable to require from a Professor of Astronomy or Surgery in Connaught a declaration that he believes in the Gospels. On what ground, then, can you think it reasonable to require from every Professor in Scotland a declaration that he approves of the Presbyterian form of church government? I defy you, with all your ingenuity, to find one argument, one rhetorical topic, against our bill which may not be used with equal effect against your own Irish Colleges Bill.

Is there any peculiarity in the academical system of Scotland which makes these tests necessary? Certainly not. The academical system of Scotland has its peculiarities; but they are peculiarities which are not in harmony with these tests, peculiarities which jar with these tests. It is an error to imagine that, by passing this bill, we shall establish a precedent which will lead to a change in the constitution of the Universities of Cambridge and Oxford. Whether such a change be or be not desirable is a question which must be decided on grounds quite distinct from those on which we rest our case. I entreat English gentlemen not to be misled by the word University. That word means two different things on the two different sides of the Tweed. The academical authorities at Cambridge and Oxford stand in a parental relation to the student. They undertake, not merely to instruct him in philology, geometry, natural philosophy, but to form his religious opinions, and to watch over his morals. He is to be bred a Churchman. At Cambridge, he cannot graduate, at Oxford, I believe, he cannot matriculate, without declaring himself a Churchman. The College is a large family. An undergraduate is lodged either within the gates, or in some private house licensed and regulated by the academical authorities. He is required to attend public worship according to the forms of the Church of England several times every week. It is the duty of one officer to note the absence of young men from divine service, of another to note their absence from the public table, of another to report those who return home at unseasonably late hours. An academical police parade the streets at night to seize upon any unlucky reveller who may be found drunk or in bad company. There are punishments of various degrees for irregularities of conduct. Sometimes the offender has to learn a chapter of the Greek Testament; sometimes he is confined to his college; sometimes he is publicly reprimanded: for grave offences he is rusticated or expelled. Now, Sir, whether this system be good or bad, efficient or inefficient, I will not now inquire. This is evident; that religious tests are perfectly in harmony with such a system. Christ Church and King's College undertake to instruct every young man who goes to them in the doctrines of the Church of England, and to see that he regularly attends the worship of the Church of England. Whether this ought to be so, I repeat, I will not now inquire: but, while it is so, nothing can be more reasonable than to require from the rulers of Christ Church and King's College some declaration that they are themselves members of the Church of England.

The character of the Scotch universities is altogether different. There you have no functionaries resembling the Vice-Chancellors and Proctors, the Heads of Houses, Tutors and Deans, whom I used to cap at Cambridge. There is no chapel; there is no academical authority entitled to ask a young man whether he goes to the parish church or the Quaker meeting, to synagogue or to mass. With his moral conduct the university has nothing to do. The Principal and the whole Academical Senate cannot put any restraint, or inflict any punishment, on a lad whom they may see lying dead drunk in the High Street of Edinburgh. In truth, a student at a Scotch university is in a situation closely resembling that of a medical student in London. There are great numbers of youths in London who attend St George's Hospital, or St Bartholomew's Hospital. One of these youths may also go to Albemarle Street to hear Mr Faraday lecture on chemistry, or to Willis's rooms to hear Mr Carlyle lecture on German literature. On the Sunday he goes perhaps to church, perhaps to the Roman Catholic chapel, perhaps to the Tabernacle, perhaps nowhere. None of the gentlemen whose lectures he has attended during the week has the smallest right to tell him where he shall worship, or to punish him for gambling in hells, or tippling in cider cellars. Surely we must all feel that it would be the height of absurdity to require Mr Faraday and Mr Carlyle to subscribe a confession of faith before they lecture; and in what does their situation differ from the situation of the Scotch professor.

In the peculiar character of the Scotch universities, therefore, I find a strong reason for the passing of this bill. I find a reason stronger still when I look at the terms of the engagements which exist between the English and Scotch nations.

Some gentlemen, I see, think that I am venturing on dangerous ground. We have been told, in confident tones, that, if we pass this bill, we shall commit a gross breach of public faith, we shall violate the Treaty of Union, and the Act of Security. With equal confidence, and with confidence much better grounded, I affirm that the Treaty of Union and the Act of Security not only do not oblige us to reject this bill, but do oblige us to pass this bill, or some bill nearly resembling this.

This proposition seems to be regarded by the Ministers as paradoxical: but I undertake to prove it by the plainest and fairest argument. I shall resort to no chicanery. If I did think that the safety of the commonwealth required that we should violate the Treaty of Union, I would violate it openly, and defend my conduct on the ground of necessity. It may, in an extreme case, be our duty to break our compacts. It never can be our duty to quibble them away. What I say is that the Treaty of Union, construed, not with the subtlety of a pettifogger, but according to the spirit, binds us to pass this bill or some similar bill.

By the Treaty of Union it was covenanted that no person should be a teacher or office-bearer in the Scotch Universities who should not declare that he conformed to the worship and polity of the Established Church of Scotland. What Church was meant by the two contracting parties? What Church was meant, more especially, by the party to the side of which we ought always to lean, I mean the weaker party? Surely the Church established in 1707, when the Union took place. Is then, the Church of Scotland at the present moment constituted, on all points which the members of that Church think essential, exactly as it was constituted in 1707? Most assuredly not.

Every person who knows anything of the ecclesiastical history of Scotland knows that, ever since the Reformation, the great body of the Presbyterians of that country have held that congregations ought to have a share in the appointment of their ministers. This principle is laid down most distinctly in the First Book of Discipline, drawn up by John Knox. It is laid down, though not quite so strongly, in the Second Book of Discipline, drawn up by Andrew Melville. And I beg gentlemen, English gentlemen, to observe that in Scotland this is not regarded as a matter of mere expediency. All staunch Presbyterians think that the flock is entitled, *jure divino*, to a voice in the appointment of the pastor, and that to force a pastor on a parish to which he is unacceptable is a sin as much forbidden by the Word of God as idolatry or perjury. I am quite sure that I do not exaggerate when I say that the highest of our high churchmen at Oxford cannot attach more importance to episcopal government and episcopal ordination than many thousands of Scotchmen, shrewd men, respectable men, men who fear God and honour the Queen, attach to this right of the people.

When, at the time of the Revolution, the Presbyterian worship and discipline were established in Scotland, the question of patronage was settled by a compromise, which was far indeed from satisfying men of extreme opinions, but which was generally accepted. An Act, passed at Edinburgh, in 1690, transferred what we should call in England the advowsons from the old patrons to parochial councils, composed of the elders and the Protestant landowners. This system, however imperfect it might appear to such rigid Covenanters as Davie Deans and Gifted Gilfillan, worked satisfactorily ; and the Scotch nation seems to have been contented with its ecclesiastical polity when the Treaty of Union was concluded. By that treaty the ecclesiastical polity of Scotland was declared to be unalterable. Nothing, therefore, can be more clear than that the Parliament of Great Britain was bound by the most sacred obligations not to revive those rights of patronage which the Parliament of Scotland had abolished.

But, Sir, the Union had not lasted five years when our ancestors were guilty of a great violation of public faith. The history of that great fault and of its consequences is full of interest and instruction. The wrong was committed hastily, and with contumelious levity. The offenders were doubtless far from foreseeing that their offence would be visited on the third and fourth generation ; that we should be paying in 1845 the penalty of what they did in 1712.

In 1712, Sir, the Whigs, who were the chief authors of the Union, had been driven from power. The prosecution of Sacheverell had made them odious to the nation. The general election of 1710 had gone against them. Tory statesmen were in office. Tory squires formed more than five-sixths of this House. The party which was uppermost thought that England had, in 1707, made a bad bargain, a bargain so bad that it could hardly be considered as binding. The guarantee so solemnly given to the Church of Scotland was a subject of loud and bitter complaint. The Ministers hated that Church much ; and their chief supporters, the country gentlemen and country clergymen of England, hated it still more. Numerous petty insults were offered to the opinions, or, if you please, the prejudices of the Presbyterians. At length it was determined to go further, and to restore to the old patrons those rights which had been taken away in 1690. A bill was brought into this House, the history of which you may trace in our Journals. Some of the entries are very significant. In spite of all remonstrances the Tory majority would not hear of delay. The Whig minority struggled hard, appealed to the Act of Union and the Act of Security, and insisted on having both those Acts read at the table. The bill passed this House, however, before the people of Scotland knew that it had been brought in. For there were then neither reporters nor railroads ; and intelligence from Westminster was longer in travelling to Cambridge than it now is in travelling to Aberdeen. The bill was in the House of Lords before the Church of Scotland could make her voice heard. Then came a petition from a committee appointed by the General Assembly to watch over the interests of religion while the General Assembly itself was not sitting. The first name attached to that petition is the name of Principal Carstairs, a man who had stood high in the esteem and favour of William the Third, and who had borne a chief part in establishing the Presbyterian Church in Scotland. Carstairs and his colleagues appealed to the Act of Union, and implored the peers not to violate that Act. But party spirit ran high; public faith was disregarded: patronage was restored. To that breach of the Treaty of Union are to be directly ascribed all the schisms that have since rent the Church of Scotland.

I will not detain the House by giving a minute account of those schisms. It is enough to say that the law of patronage produced, first the secession of 1733 and the establishment of the Associate Synod, then the secession of 1752 and the establishment of the Relief Synod, and finally the great secession of 1843 and the establishment of the Free Church. Only two years have elapsed since we saw, with mingled admiration and pity, a spectacle worthy of the best ages of the Church. Four hundred and seventy ministers resigned their stipends, quitted their manses, and went forth committing themselves, their wives, their children, to the care of Providence. Their congregations followed them by thousands, and listened eagerly to the Word of Life in tents, in barns, or on those hills and moors where the stubborn Presbyterians of a former generation had prayed and sung their psalms in defiance of the boot of Lauderdale and of the sword of Dundee. The rich gave largely of their riches. The poor contributed with the spirit of her who put her two mites into the treasury of Jerusalem. Meanwhile, in all the churches of large towns, of whole counties, the established clergy were preaching to empty benches. And of these secessions every one may be distinctly traced to that violation of the Treaty of Union which was committed in 1712.

This, Sir, is the true history of dissent in Scotland: and, this being so, how can any man have the front to invoke the Treaty of Union and the Act of Security against those who are devotedly attached to that system which the Treaty of Union and the Act of Security were designed to protect, and who are seceders only because the Treaty of Union and the Act of Security have been infringed? I implore gentlemen to reflect on the manner in which they and their fathers have acted towards the Scotch Presbyterians. First you bind yourselves by the most solemn obligations to maintain unaltered their Church as it was constituted in 1707. Five years later you alter the constitution of their Church in a point regarded by them as essential. In consequence of your breach of faith secession after secession takes place, till at length the Church of the State ceases to be the Church of the People. Then you begin to be squeamish. Then those articles of the Treaty of Union which, when they really were obligatory, you outrageously violated, now when they are no longer obligatory, now when it is no longer in your power to observe them according to the spirit, are represented as inviolable. You first, by breaking your word, turn hundreds of thousands of Churchmen into Dissenters; and then you punish them for being Dissenters, because, forsooth, you never break your word. If your consciences really are so tender, why do you not repeal the Act of 1712? Why do you not put the Church of Scotland back into the same situation in which she was in 1707. We have had occasion more than once in the course of this session to admire the casuistical skill of Her Majesty's Ministers. But I must say that even their scruple about slave-grown sugar, though that scruple is the laughing-stock of all Europe and all America, is respectable when compared with their scruple about the Treaty of Union. Is there the slightest doubt that every compact ought to be construed according to the sense in which it was understood by those who made it? And is there the slightest doubt as to the sense in which the compact between England and Scotland was understood by those who made it? Suppose that we could call up from their graves the Presbyterian divines who then sate in the General Assembly. Suppose that we could call up Carstairs; that we could call up Boston, the author of the Fourfold State; that we could relate to them the history of the ecclesiastical revolutions which have, since their time, taken place in Scotland; and that we could then ask them, "Is the Established Church, or is the Free Church, identical with the Church which existed at the time of the Union?" Is it not quite certain what their answer would be? They would say, "Our Church, the Church which you promised to maintain unalterable, was not the Church which you protect, but the Church which you oppress. Our Church was the Church of Chalmers and Brewster, not the Church of Bryce and Muir."

It is true, Sir, that the Presbyterian dissenters are not the only dissenters whom this bill will relieve. By the law, as it now stands, all persons who refuse to declare their approbation of the synodical polity, that is to say, all persons who refuse to declare that they consider episcopal government and episcopal ordination as, at least, matters altogether indifferent, are incapable of holding academical office in Scotland. Now, Sir, will any gentleman who loves the Church of England vote for maintaining this law? If, indeed, he were bound by public faith to maintain this law, I admit that he would have no choice. But I have proved, unless I greatly deceive myself, that he is not bound by public faith to maintain this law? Can he then conscientiously support the Ministers to-night? If he votes with them, he votes for persecuting what he himself believes to be the truth. He holds out to the members of his own Church lures to tempt them to renounce that Church, and to join themselves to a Church which he considers as less pure. We may differ as to the propriety of imposing penalties and disabilities on heretics. But surely we shall agree in thinking that we ought not to punish men for orthodoxy.

I know, Sir, that there are many gentlemen who dislike innovation merely as innovation, and would be glad always to keep things as they are now. Even to this class of persons I will venture to appeal. I assure them that we are not the innovators. I assure them that our object is to keep things as they are and as they have long been. In form, I own, we are proposing a change; but in truth we are resisting a change. The question really is, not whether we shall remove old tests, but whether we shall impose new ones. The law which we seek to repeal has long been obsolete. So completely have the tests been disused that, only the other day, the right honourable Baronet, the Secretary for the Home Department, when speaking in favour of the Irish Colleges Bill, told us that the Government was not making a rash experiment. "Our plan," he said, "has already been tried at Edinburgh and has succeeded. At Edinburgh the tests have been disused near a hundred years." As to Glasgow the gentlemen opposite can give us full information from their own experience. For there are at least three members of the Cabinet who have been Lords

Rectors; the First Lord of the Treasury, and the Secretaries for the Home Department and the Colonial Department. They never took the test. They probably would not have taken it; for they are all Episcopalians. In fact, they belong to the very class which the test was especially meant to exclude. The test was not meant to exclude Presbyterian dissenters: for the Presbyterian Church was not yet rent by any serious schism. Nor was the test meant to exclude the Roman Catholics; for against the Roman Catholics there was already abundant security. The Protestant Episcopalian was the enemy against whom it was, in 1707, thought peculiarly necessary to take precautions. That those precautions have long been disused the three members of the Cabinet whom I mentioned can certify.

On a sudden the law, which had long slept a deep sleep, has been awakened, stirred up, and put into vigorous action. These obsolete tests are now, it seems, to be exacted with severity. And why? Simply because an event has taken place which makes them ten times as unjust and oppressive as they would have been formerly. They were not required while the Established Church was the Church of the majority. They are to be required solely because a secession has taken place which has made the Established Church the Church of the minority. While they could have done little mischief they were suffered to lie neglected. They are now to be used, because a time has come at which they cannot be used without fatal consequences.

It is impossible for me to speak without indignation of those who have taken the lead in the work of persecution. Yet I must give them credit for courage. They have selected as their object of attack no less a man than Sir David Brewster, Principal of the University of Saint Andrews. I hold in my hand the libel, as it is technically called, in which a Presbytery of the Established Church demands that Sir David, for the crime of adhering to that ecclesiastical polity which was guaranteed to his country by the Act of Union, shall be "removed from his office, and visited with such other censure or punishment as the laws of the Church enjoin, for the glory of God, the safety of the Church, and the prosperity of the University, and to deter others holding the same important office from committing the like offence in all time coming, but that others may hear and fear the danger and detriment of following divisive courses." Yes; for the glory of God, the safety of the Church, and the prosperity of the University. What right, Sir, have the authors of such an instrument as this to raise their voices against the insolence and intolerance of the Vatican? The glory of God! As to that, I will only say that this is not the first occasion on which the glory of God has been made a pretext for the injustice of man. The safety of the Church! Sir, if, which God forbid, that Church is really possessed by the evil spirit which actuates this Presbytery; if that Church, having recently lost hundreds of able ministers and hundreds of thousands of devout hearers, shall, instead of endeavouring, by meekness, and by redoubled diligence, to regain those whom she has estranged, give them new provocation; if she shall sharpen against them an old law the edge of which has long rusted off, and which, when it was first made, was made not for her defence, but for theirs; then I pronounce the days of that Church numbered. As to the prosperity of the University, is there a corner of Europe where men of science will not laugh when they hear that the prosperity of the University of Saint Andrews is to be promoted by expelling Sir David Brewster on account of a theological squabble? The professors of Edinburgh know better than this Presbytery how the prosperity of a seat of learning is to be promoted. There the Academic Senate is almost unanimous in favour of the bill. And indeed it is quite certain that, unless this bill, or some similar bill, be passed, a new college will soon be founded and endowed with that munificence of which the history of the Free Church furnishes so many examples. From the day on which such an university arises, the old universities must decline. Now, they are practically national, and not sectarian, institutions. And yet, even now, the emoluments of a professorship are so much smaller than those which ability and industry can obtain in other ways, that it is difficult to find eminent men to fill the chairs. And if there be this difficulty now, when students of all religious persuasions attend the lectures, what is likely to happen when all the members of the Free Church go elsewhere for instruction? If there be this difficulty when you have all the world to choose professors from, what is likely to happen when your choice is narrowed to less than one-half of Scotland? As the professorships become poorer, the professors will become less competent. As the professors become less competent, the classes will become thinner. As the classes become thinner, the professorships will again become poorer. The decline will become rapid and headlong. In a short time, the lectures will be delivered to empty rooms: the grass will grow in the courts: and men not fit to be village dominies will occupy the chairs of Adam Smith and Dugald Stewart, of Reid and Black, of Playfair and Jamieson.

How do Her Majesty's Ministers like such a prospect as this! Already they have, whether by their fault or their misfortune I will not now inquire, secured for themselves an unenviable place in the history of Scotland. Their names are already inseparably associated with the disruption of her Church. Are those names to be as inseparably associated with the ruin of her Universities?

If the Government were consistent in error, some respect might be mingled with our disapprobation. But a Government which is guided by no principle; a Government which, on the gravest questions, does not know its own mind twenty-four hours together; a Government which is against tests at Cork, and for tests at Glasgow, against tests at Belfast, and for tests at Edinburgh, against tests on the Monday, for them on the Wednesday, against them again on the Thursday—how can such a Government command esteem or confidence? How can the Ministers wonder that their uncertain and capricious liberality fails to obtain the applause of the liberal party? What right have they to complain if they lose the confidence of half the nation without gaining the confidence of the other half?

But I do not speak to the Government. I speak to the House. I appeal to those who, on Monday last, voted with the Ministers against the test proposed by the honourable Baronet the Member for North Devon. I know what is due to party ties. But there is a mire so black and so deep that no leader has a right to drag his followers through it. It is only forty-eight hours since honourable gentlemen were brought down to the House to vote against requiring the professors in the Irish Colleges to make a declaration of belief in the Gospel: and now the same gentlemen are expected to come down and to vote that no man shall be a professor in a Scottish college who does not declare himself a Calvinist and a Presbyterian. Flagrant as is the injustice with which the ministers have on this occasion treated Scotland, the injustice with which they have treated their own supporters is more flagrant still. I call on all who voted with the Government on

Monday to consider whether they can consistently and honourably vote with the Government to-night: I call on all members of the Church of England to ponder well before they make it penal to be a member of the Church of England; and, lastly, I call on every man of every sect and party who loves science and letters, who is solicitous for the public tranquillity, who respects the public faith, to stand by us in this our hard struggle to avert the ruin which threatens the Universities of Scotland. I move that this bill be now read a second time.

A SPEECH

DELIVERED AT EDINBURGH ON THE 2D OF DECEMBER 1845.

The following Speech was delivered at a public meeting held at Edinburgh on the second of December, 1845, for the purpose of petitioning Her Majesty to open the ports of the United Kingdom for the free admission of corn and other food.

MY LORD PROVOST AND GENTLEMEN,—You will, I hope, believe that I am deeply sensible of the kindness with which you have received me. I only beg that you will continue to extend your indulgence to me, if it should happen that my voice should fail me in the attempt to address you. I have thought it my duty to obey your summons, though I am hardly equal to the exertion of public speaking, and though I am so situated that I can pass only a few hours among you. But it seemed to me that this was not an ordinary meeting or an ordinary crisis. It seemed to me that a great era had arrived, and that, at such a conjuncture, you were entitled to know the opinions and intentions of one who has the honour of being your representative.

With respect to the past, gentlemen, I have perhaps a little to explain, but certainly nothing to repent or to retract. My opinions, from the day on which I entered public life, have never varied. I have always considered the principle of protection of agriculture as a vicious principle. I have always thought that this vicious principle took, in the Act of 1815, in the Act of 1828, and in the Act of 1842, a singularly vicious form. This I declared twelve years ago, when I stood for Leeds: this I declared in May 1839, when I first presented myself before you; and when, a few months later, Lord Melbourne invited me to become a member of his Government, I distinctly told him that, in office or out of office, I must vote for the total repeal of the corn laws.

But in the year 1841 a very peculiar crisis arrived. There was reason to hope that it might be possible to effect a compromise, which would not indeed wholly remove the evils inseparable from a system of protection, but which would greatly mitigate them. There were some circumstances in the financial situation of the country which led those who were then the advisers of the Crown to hope that they might be able to get rid of the sliding scale, and to substitute for it a moderate fixed duty. We proposed a duty of eight shillings a quarter on wheat. The Parliament refused even to consider our plan. Her Majesty appealed to the people. I presented myself before you; and you will bear me witness that I disguised nothing. I said, "I am for a perfectly free trade in corn: but I think that, situated as we are, we should do well to consent to a compromise. If you return me to Parliament, I shall vote for the eight shilling duty. It is for you to determine whether, on those terms, you will return me or not." You agreed with me. You sent me back to the House of Commons on the distinct understanding that I was to vote for the plan proposed by the Government of which I was a member. As soon as the new Parliament met, a change of administration took place. But it seemed to me that it was my duty to support, when out of place, that proposition to which I had been a party when I was in place. I therefore did not think myself justified in voting for a perfectly free trade, till Parliament had decided against our fixed duty, and in favour of Sir Robert Peel's new sliding scale. As soon as that decision had been pronounced, I conceived that I was no longer bound by the terms of the compromise which I had, with many misgivings, consented to offer to the agriculturists, and which the agriculturists had refused to accept. I have ever since voted in favour of every motion which has been made for the total abolition of the duties on corn.

There has been, it is true, some difference of opinion between me and some of you. We belonged to the same camp: but we did not quite agree as to the mode of carrying on the war. I saw the immense strength of the interests which were arrayed against us. I saw that the corn monopoly would last for ever if those who defended it were united, while those who assailed it were divided. I saw that many men of distinguished abilities and patriotism, such men as Lord John Russell, Lord Howick, Lord Morpeth, were unwilling to relinquish all hope that the question might be settled by a compromise such as had been proposed in 1841. It seemed to me that the help of such men was indispensable to us, and that, if we drove from us such valuable allies, we should be unable to contend against the common enemy. Some of you thought that I was timorous, and others that I was misled by party spirit or by personal friendship. I still think that I judged rightly. But I will not now argue the question. It has been set at rest for ever, and in the best possible way. It is not necessary for us to consider what relations we ought to maintain with the party which is for a moderate fixed duty. That party has disappeared. Time, and reflection, and discussion, have produced their natural effect on minds eminently intelligent and candid. No intermediate shades of opinion are now left. There is no twilight. The light has been divided from the darkness. Two parties are ranged in battle array against each other. There is the standard of monopoly. Here is the standard of free trade; and by the standard of free trade I pledge myself to stand firmly.

Gentlemen, a resolution has been put into my hands which I shall move with the greatest pleasure. That resolution sets forth in emphatic language a truth of the highest importance, namely, that the present corn laws press with especial severity on the poor. There was a time, gentlemen, when politicians were not ashamed to defend the corn laws merely as contrivances for putting the money of the many into the pockets of the few. We must,—so these men reasoned,—have a powerful and opulent class of grandees: that we may have such grandees, the rent of land must be kept up: and that the rent of land may be kept up, the price of bread must be kept up. There may still be people who think thus: but they wisely keep their thoughts to themselves. Nobody now ventures to say in public that ten thousand families ought to be put on short allowance of food in order that one man may have a fine stud and a fine picture gallery. Our monopolists have changed their ground. They have abandoned their old argument for a new argument much less invidious, but, I think, rather more absurd. They have turned philanthropists. Their hearts bleed for the misery of the poor labouring man. They constantly tell us that the cry against the corn laws has been raised by capitalists; that the capitalist wishes to enrich himself at the expense both of the landed gentry and of the working people; that every reduction of the price of food must be followed by a reduction of the wages of labour; and that, if bread should cost only half what it now costs, the peasant and the artisan would be sunk in wretchedness and degradation, and the only gainers would be the millowners and the money changers. It is not only by landowners, it is not only by Tories, that this nonsense has been talked. We have heard it from men of a very different class, from demagogues who wish to keep up the corn laws, merely in order that the corn laws may make the people miserable, and that misery may make the people turbulent. You know how assiduously those enemies of all order and all property have laboured to deceive the working man into a belief that cheap bread would be a curse to him. Nor have they always laboured in vain. You remember that once, even in this great and enlightened city, a public meeting called to consider the corn laws was disturbed by a deluded populace. Now, for my own part, whenever I hear bigots who are opposed to all reform, and anarchists who are bent on universal destruction, join in the same cry, I feel certain that it is an absurd and mischievous cry; and surely never was there a cry so absurd and mischievous as this cry against cheap loaves. It seems strange that Conservatives, people who profess to hold new theories in abhorrence, people who are always talking about the wisdom of our ancestors, should insist on our receiving as an undoubted truth a strange paradox never heard of from the creation of the world till the nineteenth century. Begin with the most ancient book extant, the Book of Genesis, and come down to the parliamentary debates of 1815; and I will venture to say that you will find that, on this point, the party which affects profound reverence for antiquity and prescription has against it the unanimous voice of thirty-three centuries. If there be anything in which all peoples, nations, and languages, Jews, Greeks, Romans, Italians, Frenchmen, Englishmen, have agreed, it has been this, that the dearness of food is a great evil to the poor. Surely, the arguments which are to counterbalance such a mass of authority ought to be weighty. What then are those arguments? I know of only one. If any gentleman is acquainted with any other, I wish that he would communicate it to us; and I will engage that he shall have a fair and full hearing. The only argument that I know of is this, that there are some countries in the world where food is cheaper than in England, and where the people are more miserable than in England. Bengal has been mentioned. But Poland is the favourite case. Whenever we ask why there should not be a free trade in corn between the Vistula and the Thames, the answer is, "Do you wish our labourers to be reduced to the condition of the peasants of the Vistula?" Was such reasoning ever heard before? See how readily it may be turned against those who use it. Corn is cheaper at Cincinnati than here; but the wages of the labourer are much higher at Cincinnati than here: therefore, the lower the price of food, the higher the wages will be. This reasoning is just as good as the reasoning of our adversaries: that is to say, it is good for nothing. It is not one single cause that makes nations either prosperous or miserable. No friend of free trade is such an idiot as to say that free trade is the only valuable thing in the world; that religion, government, police, education, the administration of justice, public expenditure, foreign relations, have nothing whatever to do with the well-being of nations; that people sunk in superstition, slavery, barbarism, must be happy if they have only cheap food. These gentlemen take the most unfortunate country in the world, a country which, while it had an independent government, had the very worst of independent governments; the sovereign a mere phantom; the nobles defying him and quarrelling with each other; the great body of the population in a state of servitude; no middle class; no manufactures; scarcely any trade, and that in the hands of Jew pedlars. Such was Poland while it was a separate kingdom. But foreign invaders came down upon it. It was conquered: it was reconquered: it was partitioned: it was repartitioned: it is now under a government of which I will not trust myself to speak. This is the country to which these gentlemen go to study the effect of low prices. When they wish to ascertain the effect of high prices, they take our own country; a country which has been during many generations the best governed in Europe; a country where personal slavery has been unknown during ages; a country which enjoys the blessings of a pure religion, of freedom, of order; a country long secured by the sea against invasion; a country in which the oldest man living has never seen a foreign flag except as a trophy. Between these two countries our political philosophers institute a comparison. They find the Briton better off than the Pole; and they immediately come to the conclusion that the Briton is so well off because his bread is dear, and the Pole so ill off because his bread is cheap. Why, is there a single good which in this way I could not prove to be an evil, or a single evil which I could not prove to be a good? Take lameness. I will prove that it is the best thing in the world to be lame: for I can show you men who are lame, and yet much happier than many men who have the full use of their legs. I will prove health to be a calamity. For I can easily find you people in excellent health whose fortunes have been wrecked, whose character has been blasted, and who are more wretched than many invalids. But is that the way in which any man of common sense reasons? No; the question is: Would not the lame man be happier if you restored to him the use of his limbs? Would not the healthy man be more wretched if he had gout and rheumatism in addition to all his other calamities? Would not the Englishman be better off if food were as cheap here as in Poland? Would not the Pole be more miserable if food were as dear in Poland as here? More miserable indeed he would not long be: for he would be dead in a month.

It is evident that the true way of determining the question which we are considering, is to compare the state of a society when food is cheap with the state of that same society when food is dear; and this is a comparison which we can very easily make. We have only to recall to our memory what we have ourselves seen within the last ten years. Take the year 1835. Food was cheap then; and the capitalist prospered greatly. But was the labouring man miserable? On the contrary, it is notorious that work was plentiful, that wages were high, that the common people were thriving and contented. Then came a change like that in Pharaoh's dream. The thin ears had blighted the full ears; the lean kine had devoured the fat kine; the days of plenty were over; and the days of dearth had arrived. In 1841 the capitalist was doubtless distressed. But will anybody tell me that the capitalist was the only sufferer, or the chief sufferer? Have we forgotten what was the condition of the working people in that unhappy year? So visible was the misery of the manufacturing towns that a man of sensibility could hardly bear to pass through them. Everywhere he found filth and nakedness, and plaintive voices, and wasted forms, and haggard faces. Politicians who had never been thought alarmists began to tremble for the very foundations of society. First the mills were put on short time. Then they ceased to work at all. Then went to pledge the scanty property of the artisan: first his little luxuries, then his comforts, then his necessaries. The hovels were stripped till they were as bare as the wigwam of a Dogribbed Indian. Alone, amidst the general misery, the shop with the three golden balls prospered, and was crammed from cellar to garret with the clocks, and the tables, and the kettles, and the blankets, and the bibles of the poor. I remember well the effect which was produced in London by the unwonted sight of the huge pieces of cannon which were going northward to overawe the starving population of Lancashire. These evil days passed away. Since that time we have again had cheap bread. The capitalist has been a gainer. It was fit that he should be a gainer. But has he been the only gainer? Will those who are always telling us that the Polish labourer is worse off than the English labourer venture to tell us that the English labourer was worse off in 1844 than in 1841? Have we not everywhere seen the goods of the poor coming back from the magazine of the pawnbroker? Have we not seen in the house of the working man, in his clothing, in his very looks as he passed us in the streets, that he was a happier being? As to his pleasures, and especially as to the most innocent, the most salutary, of his pleasures, ask your own most intelligent and useful fellow citizen Mr Robert Chambers what sale popular books had in the year 1841, and what sale they had last year. I am assured that, in one week of 1845, the sums paid in wages within twenty miles of Manchester exceeded by a million and a half the sums paid in the corresponding week of 1841.

Gentlemen, both the capitalist and the labourer have been gainers, as they ought to have been gainers, by the diminution in the price of bread. But there is a third party, which ought not to have gained by that diminution, and yet has gained very greatly by it; and that party is Her Majesty's present Government. It is for the interest of rulers that those whom they rule should be prosperous. But the prosperity which we have lately enjoyed was a prosperity for which we were not indebted to our rulers. It came in spite of them. It was produced by the cheapness of that which they had laboured to render dear. Under pretence of making us independent of foreign supply, they have established a system which makes us dependent in the worst possible way. As my valued friend, the Lord Provost,* has justly said, there is a mutual dependence among nations of which we cannot get rid. That Providence has assigned different productions to different climates is a truth with which everybody is familiar. But this is not all. Even in the same climate different productions belong to different stages of civilisation. As one latitude is favourable to the vine and another to the sugar cane, so there is, in the same latitude, a state of society in which it is desirable that the industry of men should be almost entirely directed towards the cultivation of the earth, and another state of society in which it is desirable that a large part of the population should be employed in manufactures. No dependence can be conceived more natural, more salutary, more free from everything like degradation than the mutual dependence which exists between a nation which has a boundless extent of fertile land, and a nation which has a boundless command of machinery; between a nation whose business is to turn deserts into corn fields, and a nation whose business is to increase tenfold by ingenious processes the value of the fleece and of the rude iron ore. Even if that dependence were less beneficial than it is, we must submit to it; for it is inevitable. Make what laws we will, we must be dependent on other countries for a large part of our food. That point was decided when England ceased to be an exporting country. For, gentlemen, it is demonstrable that none but a country which ordinarily exports food can be independent of foreign supplies. If a manufacturer determines to produce ten thousand pair of stockings, he will produce the ten thousand, and neither more nor less. But an agriculturist cannot determine that he will produce ten thousand quarters of corn, and neither more nor less. That he may be sure of having ten thousand quarters in a bad year, he must sow such a quantity of land that he will have much more than ten thousand in a good year. It is evident that, if our island does not in ordinary years produce many more quarters than we want, it will in bad years produce fewer quarters than we want. And it is equally evident that our cultivators will not produce more quarters of corn than we want, unless they can export the surplus at a profit. Nobody ventures to tell us that Great Britain can be ordinarily an exporting country. It follows that we must be dependent: and the only question is, Which is the best mode of dependence? That question it is not difficult to answer. Go to Lancashire; see that multitude of cities, some of them equal in size to the capitals of large kingdoms. Look at the warehouses, the machinery, the canals, the railways, the docks. See the stir of that hive of human beings busily employed in making, packing, conveying stuffs which are to be worn in Canada and Caffraria, in Chili and Java. You naturally ask, How is this immense population, collected on an area which will not yield food for one tenth part of them, to be nourished? But change the scene. Go beyond the Ohio, and there you will see another species of industry, equally extensive and equally flourishing. You will see the wilderness receding fast before the advancing tide of life and civilisation, vast harvests waving round the black stumps of what a few months ago was a pathless forest, and cottages, barns, mills, rising amidst the haunts of the wolf and the bear. Here is more than enough corn to feed the artisans of our thickly peopled island; and most gladly would the grower of that corn exchange it for a Sheffield knife, a Birmingham spoon, a warm coat of Leeds woollen cloth, a light dress of Manchester cotton. But this exchange our rulers prohibit. They say to our manufacturing population, "You would willingly weave clothes for the people of America, and they would gladly sow wheat for you; but we prohibit this intercourse. We condemn both your looms and their ploughs to inaction. We will compel you to pay a high price for a stinted meal. We will compel those who would gladly be your purveyors and your customers to be your rivals. We will compel them to turn manufacturers in self-defence; and when, in close imitation of us, they impose high duties on British goods for the protection of their own produce, we will, in our speeches and despatches, express wonder and pity at their strange ignorance of political economy."

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* Mr Adam Black.

Such has been the policy of Her Majesty's Ministers; but it has not yet been fairly brought to the trial. Good harvests have prevented bad laws from producing their full effect. The Government has had a run of luck; and vulgar observers have mistaken luck for wisdom. But such runs of luck do not last for ever. Providence will not always send the rain and the sunshine just at such a time and in such a quantity as to save the reputation of shortsighted statesmen. There is too much reason to believe that evil days are approaching. On such a subject it is a sacred duty to avoid exaggeration; and I shall do so. I observe that the writers,—wretched writers they are,—who defend the present Administration, assert that there is no probability of a considerable rise in the price of provisions, and that the Whigs and the Anti-Corn-Law League are busily engaged in circulating false reports for the vile purpose of raising a panic. Now, gentlemen, it shall not be in the power of anybody to throw any such imputation on me; for I shall describe our prospects in the words of the Ministers themselves. I hold in my hand a letter in which Sir Thomas Freemantle, Secretary for Ireland, asks for information touching the potato crop in that country. His words are these. "Her Majesty's Government is seeking to learn the opinion of judges and well informed persons in every part of Ireland regarding the probability of the supply being sufficient for the support of the people during the ensuing winter and spring, provided care be taken in preserving the stock, and economy used in its consumption." Here, you will observe, it is taken for granted that the supply is not sufficient for a year's consumption: it is taken for granted that, without care and economy, the supply will not last to the end of the spring; and a doubt is expressed whether, with care and economy, the supply will last even through the winter. In this letter the Ministers of the Crown tell us that famine is close at hand; and yet, when this letter was written, the duty on foreign corn was seventeen shillings a quarter. Is it necessary to say more about the merits of the sliding scale? We were assured that this wonderful piece of machinery would secure us against all danger of scarcity. But unhappily we find that there is a hitch; the sliding scale will not slide; the Ministers are crying "Famine," while the index which they themselves devised is still pointing to "Plenty."

And thus, Sir, I come back to the resolution which I hold in my hand, A dear year is before us. The price of meal is already, I believe, half as much again as it was a few months ago. Again, unhappily, we are able to bring to the test of facts the doctrine, that the dearness of food benefits the labourer and injures only the capitalist. The price of food is rising. Are wages rising? On the contrary, they are falling. In numerous districts the symptoms of distress are already perceptible. The manufacturers are already beginning to work short time. Warned by repeated experience, they know well what is coming, and expect that 1846 will be a second 1841.

If these things do not teach us wisdom, we are past all teaching. Twice in ten years we have seen the price of corn go up; and, as it went up, the wages of the labouring classes went down. Twice in the same period we have seen the price of corn go down; and, as it went down, the wages of the labouring classes went up. Surely such experiments as these would in any science be considered as decisive.

The prospect, gentlemen, is, doubtless, gloomy. Yet it has its bright part. I have already congratulated you on the important fact that Lord John Russell and those who have hitherto acted on this subject in concert with him, have given up all thoughts of a fixed duty. I have to congratulate you on another fact not less important. I am assured that the working people of the manufacturing districts have at last come to understand this question. The sharp discipline which they have undergone has produced this good effect; that they will never again listen to any orator who shall have the effrontery to tell them that their wages rise and fall with the price of the loaf. Thus we shall go into the contest under such leading and with such a following as we never had before. The best part of the aristocracy will be at our head. Millions of labouring men, who had been separated from us by the arts of impostors, will be in our rear. So led and so followed, we may, I think, look forward to victory, if not in this, yet in the next Parliament. But, whether our triumph be near or remote, I assure you that I shall not fail as regards this question, to prove myself your true representative. I will now, my Lord, put into your hands this resolution, "That the present corn law presses with especial severity on the poorer classes."

A SPEECH

DELIVERED IN THE HOUSE OF COMMONS ON THE 22D OF MAY 1846.

On the twenty-ninth of April, 1846, Mr Fielden, Member for Oldham, moved the second reading of a Bill for limiting the labour of young persons in factories to ten hours a day. The debate was adjourned, and was repeatedly resumed at long intervals. At length, on the twenty-second of May the Bill was rejected by 203 votes to 193. On that day the following Speech was made.

It is impossible, Sir, that I can remain silent after the appeal which has been made to me in so pointed a manner by my honourable friend, the Member for Sheffield,* and even if that appeal had not been made to me, I should have been very desirous to have an opportunity of explaining the grounds on which I shall vote for the second reading of this bill.

It is, I hope, unnecessary for me to assure my honourable friend that I utterly disapprove of those aspersions which have, both in this House and out of it, been thrown on the owners of factories. For that valuable class of men I have no feeling but respect and good will. I am convinced that with their interests the interests of the whole community, and especially of the labouring classes, are inseparably bound up. I can also with perfect sincerity declare that the vote which I shall give to-night will not be a factious vote. In no circumstances indeed should I think that the laws of political hostility warranted me in treating this question as a party question. But at the present moment I would much rather strengthen than weaken the hands of Her Majesty's Ministers. It is by no means pleasant to me to be under the necessity of opposing them. I assure them, I assure my friends on this side of the House with whom I am so unfortunate as to differ, and especially my honourable friend the Member for Sheffield, who spoke, I must say, in rather too plaintive a tone, that I have no desire to obtain credit for humanity at their expense. I fully believe that their feeling towards the labouring people is quite as kind as mine. There is no difference between us as to ends: there is an honest difference of opinion as to means: and we surely ought to be able to discuss the points on which we differ without one angry emotion or one acrimonious word.

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* Mr Ward.

The details of the bill, Sir, will be more conveniently and more regularly discussed when we consider it in Committee. Our business at present is with the principle: and the principle, we are told by many gentlemen of great authority, is unsound. In their opinion, neither this bill, nor any other bill regulating the hours of labour, can be defended. This, they say, is one of those matters about which we ought not to legislate at all; one of those matters which settle themselves far better than any government can settle them. Now it is most important that this point should be fully cleared up. We certainly ought not to usurp functions which do not properly belong to us: but, on the other hand, we ought not to abdicate functions which do properly belong to us. I hardly know which is the greater pest to society, a paternal government, that is to say a prying, meddlesome government, which intrudes itself into every part of human life, and which thinks that it can do everything for everybody better than anybody can do anything for himself; or a careless, lounging government, which suffers grievances, such as it could at once remove, to grow and multiply, and which to all complaint and remonstrance has only one answer: "We must let things alone: we must let things take their course: we must let things find their level." There is no more important problem in politics than to ascertain the just mean between these two most pernicious extremes, to draw correctly the line which divides those cases in which it is the duty of the State to interfere from those cases in which it is the duty of the State to abstain from interference. In old times the besetting sin of rulers was undoubtedly an inordinate disposition to meddle. The lawgiver was always telling people how to keep their shops, how to till their fields, how to educate their children, how many dishes to have on their tables, how much a yard to give for the cloth which made their coats. He was always trying to remedy some evil which did not properly fall within his province: and the consequence was that he increased the evils which he attempted to remedy. He was so much shocked by the distress inseparable from scarcity that he made statutes against forestalling and regrating, and so turned the scarcity into a famine. He was so much shocked by the cunning and hardheartedness of money-lenders that he made laws against usury; and the consequence was that the borrower, who, if he had been left unprotected, would have got money at ten per cent., could hardly, when protected, get it at fifteen per cent. Some eminent political philosophers of the last century exposed with great ability the folly of such legislation, and, by doing so, rendered a great service to mankind. There has been a reaction, a reaction which has doubtless produced much good, but which like most reactions, has not been without evils and dangers. Our statesmen cannot now be accused of being busybodies. But I am afraid that there is, even in some of the ablest and most upright among them a tendency to the opposite fault. I will give an instance of what I mean. Fifteen years ago it became evident that railroads would soon, in every part of the kingdom, supersede to a great extent the old highways. The tracing of the new routes which were to join all the chief cities, ports, and naval arsenals of the island was a matter of the highest national importance. But, unfortunately, those who should have acted for the nation, refused to interfere. Consequently, numerous questions which were really public, questions which concerned the public convenience, the public prosperity, the public security, were treated as private questions. That the whole society was interested in having a good system of internal communication seemed to be forgotten. The speculator who wanted a large dividend on his shares, the landowner who wanted a large price for his acres, obtained a full hearing. But nobody applied to be heard on behalf of the community. The effects of that great error we feel, and we shall not soon cease to feel. Unless I am greatly mistaken, we are in danger of committing to-night an error of the same kind. The honourable Member for Montrose * and my honourable friend the Member for Sheffield think that the question before us is merely a question between the old and the new theories of commerce. They cannot understand how any friend of free trade can wish the Legislature to interfere between the capitalist and the labourer. They say, "You do not make a law to settle the price of gloves, or the texture of gloves, or the length of credit which the glover shall give. You leave it to him to determine whether he will charge high or low prices, whether he will use strong or flimsy materials, whether he will trust or insist on ready money. You acknowledge that these are matters which he ought to be left to settle with his customers, and that we ought not to interfere. It is possible that he may manage his shop ill. But it is certain that we shall manage it ill. On the same grounds on which you leave the seller of gloves and the buyer of gloves to make their own contract, you ought to leave the seller of labour and the buyer of labour to make their own contract."

I have a great respect, Sir, for those who reason thus: but I cannot see this matter in the light in which it appears to them; and, though I may distrust my own judgment, I must be guided by it. I am, I believe, as strongly attached as any member of this House to the principle of free trade, rightly understood. Trade, considered merely as trade, considered merely with reference to the pecuniary interest of the contracting parties, can hardly be too free. But there is a great deal of trade which cannot be considered merely as trade, and which affects higher than pecuniary interests. And to say that Government never ought to regulate such trade is a monstrous proposition, a proposition at which Adam Smith would have stood aghast. We impose some restrictions on trade for purposes of police. Thus, we do not suffer everybody who has a cab and a horse to ply for passengers in the streets of London. We do not leave the fare to be determined by the supply and the demand. We do not permit a driver to extort a guinea for going half a mile on a rainy day when there is no other vehicle on the stand. We impose some restrictions on trade for the sake of revenue. Thus, we forbid a farmer to cultivate tobacco on his own ground. We impose some restrictions on trade for the sake of national defence. Thus we compel a man who would rather be ploughing or weaving to go into the militia; and we fix the amount of pay which he shall receive without asking his consent. Nor is there in all this anything inconsistent with the soundest political economy. For the science of political economy teaches us only that we ought not on commercial grounds to interfere with the liberty of commerce; and we, in the cases which I have put, interfere with the liberty of commerce on higher than commercial grounds.

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* Mr Hume.

And now, Sir, to come closer to the case with which we have to deal. I say, first, that where the health of the community is concerned, it may be the duty of the State to interfere with the contracts of individuals; and to this proposition I am quite sure that Her Majesty's Government will cordially assent. I have just read a very interesting report signed by two members of that Government, the Duke of Buccleuch, and the noble earl who was lately Chief Commissioner of the Woods and Forests, and who is now Secretary for Ireland; * and, since that report was laid before the House, the noble earl himself has, with the sanction of the Cabinet, brought in a bill for the protection of the public health. By this bill it is provided that no man shall be permitted to build a house on his own land in any great town without giving notice to certain Commissioners. No man is to sink a cellar without the consent of these Commissioners. The house must not be of less than a prescribed width. No new house must be built without a drain. If an old house has no drain, the Commissioners may order the owner to make a drain. If he refuses, they make a drain for him, and send him in the bill. They may order him to whitewash his house. If he refuses, they may send people with pails and brushes to whitewash it for him, at his charge. Now, suppose that some proprietor of houses at Leeds or Manchester were to expostulate with the Government in the language in which the Government has expostulated with the supporters of this bill for the regulation of factories. Suppose he were to say to the noble earl, "Your lordship professes to be a friend to free trade. Your lordship's doctrine is that everybody ought to be at liberty to buy cheap and to sell dear. Why then may not I run up a house as cheap as I can, and let my rooms as dear as I can? Your lordship does not like houses without drains. Do not take one of mine then. You think my bedrooms filthy. Nobody forces you to sleep in them. Use your own liberty: but do not restrain that of your neighbours. I can find many a family willing to pay a shilling a week for leave to live in what you call a hovel. And why am not I to take the shilling which they are willing to give me? And why are not they to have such shelter as, for that shilling, I can afford them? Why did you send a man without my consent to clean my house, and then force me to pay for what I never ordered? My tenants thought the house clean enough for them; or they would not have been my tenants; and, if they and I were satisfied, why did you, in direct defiance of all the principles of free trade, interfere between us?" This reasoning, Sir, is exactly of a piece with the reasoning of the honourable Member for Montrose, and of my honourable friend the Member for Sheffield. If the noble earl will allow me to make a defence for him, I believe that he would answer the objection thus: "I hold," he would say, "the sound doctrine of free trade. But your doctrine of free trade is an exaggeration, a caricature of the sound doctrine; and by exhibiting such a caricature you bring discredit on the sound doctrine. We should have nothing to do with the contracts between you and your tenants, if those contracts affected only pecuniary interests. But higher than pecuniary interests are at stake. It concerns the commonwealth that the great body of the people should not live in a way which makes life wretched and short, which enfeebles the body and pollutes the mind. If, by living in houses which resemble hogstyes, great numbers of our countrymen have contracted the tastes of hogs, if they have become so familiar with filth and stench and contagion,

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* The Earl of Lincoln.

that they burrow without reluctance in holes which would turn the stomach of any man of cleanly habits, that is only an additional proof that we have too long neglected our duties, and an additional reason for our now performing them."

Secondly, I say that where the public morality is concerned it may be the duty of the State to interfere with the contracts of individuals. Take the traffic in licentious books and pictures. Will anybody deny that the State may, with propriety, interdict that traffic? Or take the case of lotteries. I have, we will suppose, an estate for which I wish to get twenty thousand pounds. I announce my intention to issue a thousand tickets at twenty pounds each. The holder of the number which is first drawn is to have the estate. But the magistrate interferes; the contract between me and the purchasers of my tickets is annulled; and I am forced to pay a heavy penalty for having made such a contract. I appeal to the principle of free trade, as expounded by the honourable gentlemen the Members for Montrose and Sheffield. I say to you, the legislators who have restricted my liberty, "What business have you to interfere between a buyer and a seller? If you think the speculation a bad one, do not take tickets. But do not interdict other people from judging for themselves." Surely you would answer, "You would be right if this were a mere question of trade: but it is a question of morality. We prohibit you from disposing of your property in this particular mode, because it is a mode which tends to encourage a most pernicious habit of mind, a habit of mind incompatible with all the qualities on which the well-being of individuals and of nations depends."

It must then, I think, be admitted that, where health is concerned, and where morality is concerned, the State is justified in interfering with the contracts of individuals. And, if this be admitted, it follows that the case with which we now have to do is a case for interference.

Will it be denied that the health of a large part of the rising generation may be seriously affected by the contracts which this bill is intended to regulate? Can any man who has read the evidence which is before us, can any man who has ever observed young people, can any man who remembers his own sensations when he was young, doubt that twelve hours a day of labour in a factory is too much for a lad of thirteen?

Or will it be denied that this is a question in which public morality is concerned? Can any one doubt,—none, I am sure, of my friends around me doubts,—that education is a matter of the highest importance to the virtue and happiness of a people? Now we know that there can be no education without leisure. It is evident that, after deducting from the day twelve hours for labour in a factory, and the additional hours necessary for exercise, refreshment, and repose, there will not remain time enough for education.

I have now, I think, shown that this bill is not in principle objectionable; and yet I have not touched the strongest part of our case. I hold that, where public health is concerned, and where public morality is concerned, the State may be justified in regulating even the contracts of adults. But we propose to regulate only the contracts of infants. Now, was there ever a civilised society in which the contracts of infants were not under some regulation? Is there a single member of this House who will say that a wealthy minor of thirteen ought to be at perfect liberty to execute a conveyance of his estate, or to give a bond for fifty thousand pounds? If anybody were so absurd as to say, "What has the Legislature to do with the matter? Why cannot you leave trade free? Why do you pretend to understand the boy's interest better than he understands it?"—you would answer; "When he grows up, he may squander his fortune away if he likes: but at present the State is his guardian; and he shall not ruin himself till he is old enough to know what he is about." The minors whom we wish to protect have not indeed large property to throw away: but they are not the less our wards. Their only inheritance, the only fund to which they must look for their subsistence through life, is the sound mind in the sound body. And is it not our duty to prevent them from wasting their most precious wealth before they know its value?

But, it is said, this bill, though it directly limits only the labour of infants, will, by an indirect operation, limit also the labour of adults. Now, Sir, though I am not prepared to vote for a bill directly limiting the labour of adults, I will plainly say that I do not think that the limitation of the labour of adults would necessarily produce all those frightful consequences which we have heard predicted. You cheer me in very triumphant tones, as if I had uttered some monstrous paradox. Pray, does it not occur to any of you that the labour of adults is now limited in this country? Are you not aware that you are living in a society in which the labour of adults is limited to six days in seven? It is you, not I, who maintain a paradox opposed to the opinions and the practices of all nations and ages. Did you ever hear of a single civilised State since the beginning of the world in which a certain portion of time was not set apart for the rest and recreation of adults by public authority? In general, this arrangement has been sanctioned by religion. The Egyptians, the Jews, the Greeks, the Romans, had their holidays: the Hindoo has his holidays: the Mussulman has his holidays: there are holidays in the Greek Church, holidays in the Church of Rome, holidays in the Church of England. Is it not amusing to hear a gentleman pronounce with confidence that any legislation which limits the labour of adults must produce consequences fatal to society, without once reflecting that in the society in which he lives, and in every other society that exists, or ever has existed, there has been such legislation without any evil consequence? It is true that a Puritan Government in England, and an Atheistical Government in France, abolished the old holidays as superstitious. But those Governments felt it to be absolutely necessary to institute new holidays. Civil festivals were substituted for religious festivals. You will find among the ordinances of the Long Parliament a law providing that, in exchange for the days of rest and amusement which the people had been used to enjoy at Easter, Whitsuntide, and Christmas, the second Tuesday in every month should be given to the working man, and that any apprentice who was forced to work on the second Tuesday of any month might have his master up before a magistrate. The French Jacobins decreed that the Sunday should no longer be a day of rest; but they instituted another day of rest, the Decade. They swept away the holidays of the Roman Catholic Church; but they instituted another set of holidays, the Sansculottides, one sacred to Genius, one to Industry, one to Opinion, and so on. I say, therefore, that the practice of limiting by law the time of the labour of adults is so far from being, as some gentlemen seem to think, an unheard of and monstrous practice, that it is a practice as universal as cookery, as the wearing of clothes, as the use of domestic animals.

And has this practice been proved by experience to be pernicious? Let us take the instance with which we are most familiar. Let us inquire what has been the effect of those laws which, in our own country, limit the labour of adults to six days in every seven. It is quite unnecessary to discuss the question whether Christians be or be not bound by a divine command to observe the Sunday. For it is evident that, whether our weekly holiday be of divine or of human institution, the effect on the temporal interests of Society will be exactly the same. Now, is there a single argument in the whole Speech of my honourable friend the Member for Sheffield which does not tell just as strongly against the laws which enjoin the observance of the Sunday as against the bill on our table? Surely, if his reasoning is good for hours, it must be equally good for days.

He says, "If this limitation be good for the working people, rely on it that they will find it out, and that they will themselves establish it without any law." Why not reason in the same way about the Sunday? Why not say, "If it be a good thing for the people of London to shut their shops one day in seven, they will find it out, and will shut their shops without a law?" Sir, the answer is obvious. I have no doubt that, if you were to poll the shopkeepers of London, you would find an immense majority, probably a hundred to one, in favour of closing shops on the Sunday; and yet it is absolutely necessary to give to the wish of the majority the sanction of a law; for, if there were no such law, the minority, by opening their shops, would soon force the majority to do the same.

But, says my honourable friend, you cannot limit the labour of adults unless you fix wages. This proposition he lays down repeatedly, assures us that it is incontrovertible, and indeed seems to think it self-evident; for he has not taken the trouble to prove it. Sir, my answer shall be very short. We have, during many centuries, limited the labour of adults to six days in seven; and yet we have not fixed the rate of wages.

But, it is said, you cannot legislate for all trades; and therefore you had better not legislate for any. Look at the poor sempstress. She works far longer and harder than the factory child. She sometimes plies her needle fifteen, sixteen hours in the twenty-four. See how the housemaid works, up at six every morning, and toiling up stairs and down stairs till near midnight. You own that you cannot do anything for the sempstress and the housemaid. Why then trouble yourself about the factory child? Take care that by protecting one class you do not aggravate the hardships endured by the classes which you cannot protect. Why, Sir, might not all this be said, word for word, against the laws which enjoin the observance of the Sunday? There are classes of people whom you cannot prevent from working on the Sunday. There are classes of people whom, if you could, you ought not to prevent from working on the Sunday. Take the sempstress, of whom so much has been said. You cannot keep her from sewing and hemming all Sunday in her garret. But you do not think that a reason for suffering Covent Garden Market, and Leadenhall Market, and Smithfield Market, and all the shops from Mile End to Hyde Park to be open all Sunday. Nay, these factories about which we are debating,—does anybody propose that they shall be allowed to work all Sunday? See then how inconsistent you are. You think it unjust to limit the labour of the factory child to ten hours a day, because you cannot limit the labour of the sempstress. And yet you see no injustice in limiting the labour of the factory child, aye, and of the factory man, to six days in the week, though you cannot limit the labour of the sempstress.

But, you say, by protecting one class we shall aggravate the sufferings of all the classes which we cannot protect. You say this; but you do not prove it; and all experience proves the contrary We interfere on the Sunday to close the shops. We do not interfere with the labour of the housemaid. But are the housemaids of London more severely worked on the Sunday than on other days? The fact notoriously is the reverse. For your legislation keeps the public feeling in a right state, and thus protects indirectly those whom it cannot protect directly.

Will my honourable friend the Member for Sheffield maintain that the law which limits the number of working days has been injurious to the working population? I am certain that he will not. How then can he expect me to believe that a law which limits the number of working hours must necessarily be injurious to the working population? Yet he and those who agree with him seem to wonder at our dulness because we do not at once admit the truth of the doctrine which they propound on this subject. They reason thus. We cannot reduce the number of hours of labour in factories without reducing the amount of production. We cannot reduce the amount of production without reducing the remuneration of the labourer. Meanwhile, foreigners, who are at liberty to work till they drop down dead at their looms, will soon beat us out of all the markets of the world. Wages will go down fast. The condition of our working people will be far worse than it is; and our unwise interference will, like the unwise interference of our ancestors with the dealings of the corn factor and the money lender, increase the distress of the very class which we wish to relieve.

Now, Sir, I fully admit that there might be such a limitation of the hours of labour as would produce the evil consequences with which we are threatened; and this, no doubt, is a very good reason for legislating with great caution, for feeling our way, for looking well to all the details of this bill. But it is certainly not true that every limitation of the hours of labour must produce these consequences. And I am, I must say, surprised when I hear men of eminent ability and knowledge lay down the proposition that a diminution of the time of labour must be followed by diminution of the wages of labour, as a proposition universally true, as a proposition capable of being strictly demonstrated, as a proposition about which there can be no more doubt than about any theorem in Euclid. Sir, I deny the truth of the proposition; and for this plain reason. We have already, by law, greatly reduced the time of labour in factories. Thirty years ago, the late Sir Robert Peel told the House that it was a common practice to make children of eight years of age toil in mills fifteen hours a day. A law has since been made which prohibits persons under eighteen years of age from working in mills more than twelve hours a day. That law was opposed on exactly the same grounds on which the bill before us is opposed. Parliament was told then, as it is told now, that with the time of labour the quantity of production would decrease, that with the quantity of production the wages would decrease, that our manufacturers would be unable to contend with foreign manufacturers, and that the condition of the labouring population instead of being made better by the interference of the Legislature would be made worse. Read over those debates; and you may imagine that you are reading the debate of this evening. Parliament disregarded these prophecies. The time of labour was limited. Have wages fallen? Has the cotton trade left Manchester for France or Germany? Has the condition of the working people become more miserable? Is it not universally acknowledged that the evils which were so confidently predicted have not come to pass? Let me be understood. I am not arguing that, because a law which reduced the hours of daily labour from fifteen to twelve did not reduce wages, a law reducing those hours from twelve to ten or eleven cannot possibly reduce wages. That would be very inconclusive reasoning. What I say is this, that, since a law which reduced the hours of daily labour from fifteen to twelve has not reduced wages, the proposition that every reduction of the hours of labour must necessarily reduce wages is a false proposition. There is evidently some flaw in that demonstration which my honourable friend thinks so complete ; and what the flaw is we may perhaps discover if we look at the analogous case to which I have so often referred.

Sir, exactly three hundred years ago, great religious changes were taking place in England. Much was said and written, in that inquiring and innovating age, about the question whether Christians were under a religious obligation to rest from labour on one day in the week ; and it is well known that the chief Reformers, both here and on the Continent, denied the existence of any such obligation. Suppose then that, in 1546, Parliament had made a law that there should thenceforth be no distinction between the Sunday and any other day. Now, Sir, our opponents, if they are consistent with themselves, must hold that such a law would have immensely increased the wealth of the country and the remuneration of the working man. What an effect, if their principles be sound, must have been produced by the addition of one sixth to the time of labour ! What an increase of production ! What a rise of wages ! How utterly unable must the foreign artisan, who still had his days of festivity and of repose, have found himself to maintain a competition with a people whose shops were open, whose markets were crowded, whose spades and axes, and planes, and hods, and anvils, and looms were at work from morning till night on three hundred and sixty-five days a year ! The Sundays of three hundred years make up fifty years of our working days. We know what the industry of fifty years can do. We know what marvels the industry of the last fifty years has wrought. The arguments of my honourable friend irresistibly lead us to this conclusion, that if, during the last three centuries, the Sunday had not been observed as a day of rest, we should have been a far richer, a far more highly civilised people than we now are, and that the labouring classes especially would have been far better off than at present. But does he, does any Member of the House, seriously believe that this would have been the case ? For my own part, I have not the smallest doubt that, if we and our ancestors had, during the last three centuries, worked just as hard on the Sunday as on the week days, we should have been at this moment a poorer people and a less civilised people than we are ; that there would have been less production than there has been, that the wages of the labourer would have been lower than they are, and that some other nation would have been now making cotton stuffs and woollen stuffs and cutlery for the whole world.

Of course, Sir, I do not mean to say that a man will not produce more in a week by working seven days than by working six days. But I very much doubt whether, at the end of a year, he will generally have produced more by working seven days a week than by working six days a week ; and I firmly believe that, at the end of twenty years, he will have produced much less by working seven days a week than by working six days a week. In the same manner I do not deny that a factory child will produce more, in a single day, by working twelve hours than by working ten hours, and by working fifteen hours than by working twelve hours. But I do deny that a great society in which children work fifteen, or even twelve hours a day will, in the lifetime of a generation, produce as much as if those children had worked less. If we consider man merely in a commercial point of view, if we consider him merely as a machine for the production of worsted and calico, let us not forget what a piece of mechanism he is, how fearfully and wonderfully made. We do not treat a fine horse or a sagacious dog exactly as we treat a spinning jenny. Nor will any slaveholder, who has sense enough to know his own interest, treat his human chattels exactly as he treats his horses and his dogs. And would you treat the free labourer of England like a mere wheel or pulley? Rely on it that intense labour, beginning too early in life, continued too long every day, stunting the growth of the body, stunting the growth of the mind, leaving no time for healthful exercise, leaving no time for intellectual culture, must impair all those high qualities which have made our country great. Your overworked boys will become a feeble and ignoble race of men, the parents of a more feeble and more ignoble progeny; nor will it be long before the deterioration of the labourer will injuriously affect those very interests to which his physical and moral energies have been sacrificed. On the other hand, a day of rest recurring in every week, two or three hours of leisure, exercise, innocent amusement or useful study, recurring every day, must improve the whole man, physically, morally, intellectually; and the improvement of the man will improve all that the man produces. Why is it, Sir, that the Hindoo cotton manufacturer, close to whose door the cotton grows, cannot, in the bazaar of his own town, maintain a competition with the English cotton manufacturer, who has to send thousands of miles for the raw material, and who has then to send the wrought material thousands of miles to market? You will say that it is owing to the excellence of our machinery. And to what is the excellence of our machinery owing? How many of the improvements which have been made in our machinery do we owe to the ingenuity and patient thought of working men? Adam Smith tells us in the first chapter of his great work, that you can hardly go to a factory without seeing some very pretty machine,—that is his expression,—devised by some labouring man. Hargraves, the inventor of the spinning jenny, was a common artisan. Crompton, the inventor of the mule jenny, was a working man. How many hours of the labour of children would do so much for our manufactures as one of these improvements has done? And in what sort of society are such improvements most likely to be made? Surely in a society in which the faculties of the working people are developed by education. How long will you wait before any negro, working under the lash in Louisiana, will contrive a better machinery for squeezing the sugar canes? My honourable friend seems to me, in all his reasonings about the commercial prosperity of nations, to overlook entirely the chief cause on which that prosperity depends. What is it, Sir, that makes the great difference between country and country? Not the exuberance of soil; not the mildness of climate; not mines, nor havens, nor rivers. These things are indeed valuable when put to their proper use by human intelligence: but human intelligence can do much without them; and they without human intelligence can do nothing. They exist in the highest degree in regions of which the inhabitants are few, and squalid, and barbarous, and naked, and starving; while on sterile rocks, amidst unwholesome marshes, and under inclement skies, may be found immense populations, well fed, well lodged, well clad, well governed. Nature meant Egypt and Sicily to be the gardens of the world. They once were so. Is it anything in the earth or in the air that makes Scotland more prosperous than Egypt, that makes Holland more prosperous than Sicily? No; it was the Scotchman that made Scotland; it was the Dutchman that made Holland. Look at North America. Two centuries ago the sites on which now arise mills, and hotels, and banks, and colleges, and churches, and the Senate Houses of flourishing commonwealths, were deserts abandoned to the panther and the bear. What has made the change? Was it the rich mould, or the redundant rivers? No: the prairies were as fertile, the Ohio and the Hudson were as broad and as full then as now. Was the improvement the effect of some great transfer of capital from the old world to the new? No; the emigrants generally carried out with them no more than a pittance; but they carried out the English heart, and head, and arm; and the English heart and head and arm turned the wilderness into cornfield and orchard, and the huge trees of the primeval forest into cities and fleets. Man, man is the great instrument that produces wealth. The natural difference between Campania and Spitzbergen is trifling, when compared with the difference between a country inhabited by men full of bodily and mental vigour, and a country inhabited by men sunk in bodily and mental decrepitude. Therefore it is that we are not poorer but richer, because we have, through many ages, rested from our labour one day in seven. That day is not lost. While industry is suspended, while the plough lies in the furrow, while the Exchange is silent, while no smoke ascends from the factory, a process is going on quite as important to the wealth of nations as any process which is performed on more busy days. Man, the machine of machines, the machine compared with which all the contrivances of the Watts and the Arkwrights are worthless, is repairing and winding up, so that he returns to his labours on the Monday with clearer intellect, with livelier spirits, with renewed corporal vigour. Never will I believe that what makes a population stronger, and healthier, and wiser, and better, can ultimately make it poorer. You try to frighten us by telling us, that in some German factories, the young work seventeen hours in the twenty-four, that they work so hard that among thousands there is not one who grows to such a stature that he can be admitted into the army; and you ask whether, if we pass this bill, we can possibly hold our own against such competition as this? Sir, I laugh at the thought of such competition. If ever we are forced to yield the foremost place among commercial nations, we shall yield it, not to a race of degenerate dwarfs, but to some people pre-eminently vigorous in body and in mind.

For these reasons, Sir, I approve of the principle of this bill, and shall, without hesitation, vote for the second reading. To what extent we ought to reduce the hours of labour is a question of more difficulty. I think that we are in the situation of a physician who has satisfied himself that there is a disease, and that there is a specific medicine for the disease, but who is not certain what quantity of that medicine the patient's constitution will bear. Such a physician would probably administer his remedy by small doses, and carefully watch its operation. I cannot help thinking that, by at once reducing the hours of labour from twelve to ten, we should hazard too much. The change is great, and ought to be cautiously and gradually made. Suppose that there should be an immediate fall of wages, which is not impossible. Might there not be a violent reaction? Might not the public take up a notion that our legislation had been erroneous in principle, though, in truth, our error would have been an error, not of principle, but merely of degree? Might not Parliament be induced to retrace its steps? Might we not find it difficult to maintain even the present limitation? The wisest course would, in my opinion, be to reduce the hours of labour from twelve to eleven, to observe the effect of that experiment, and if, as I hope and believe, the result should be satisfactory, then to make a further reduction from eleven to ten. This is a question, however, which will be with more advantage considered when we are in Committee.

One word, Sir, before I sit down, in answer to my noble friend near me.* He seems to think that this bill is ill timed. I own that I cannot agree with him. We carried up on Monday last to the bar of the Lords a bill which will remove the most hateful and pernicious restriction that ever was laid on trade. Nothing can be more proper than to apply, in the same week, a remedy to a great evil of a directly opposite kind. As lawgivers, we have two great faults to confess and to repair. We have done that which we ought not to have done. We have left undone that which we ought to have done. We have regulated that which we should have left to regulate itself. We have left unregulated that which we were bound to regulate. We have given to some branches of industry a protection which has proved their bane. We have withheld from public health and public morals the protection which was their due. We have prevented the labourer from buying his loaf where he could get it cheapest; but we have not prevented him from ruining his body and mind by premature and immoderate toil. I hope that we have seen the last both of a vicious system of interference and of a vicious system of non-interference, and that our poorer countrymen will no longer have reason to attribute their sufferings either to our meddling or to our neglect.

A SPEECH

Delivered at the Opening of the Edinburgh Philosophical Institution on the 4th of November 1846.

I thank you, Gentlemen, for this cordial reception. I have thought it right to steal a short time from duties not unimportant for the purpose of lending my aid to an undertaking calculated, as I think, to raise the credit and to promote the best interests of the city which has so many claims on my gratitude.

The Directors of our Institution have requested me to propose to you as a toast the Literature of Britain. They could not have assigned to me a more agreeable duty. The chief object of this Institution is, I conceive, to impart knowledge through the medium of our own language. Edinburgh is already rich in libraries worthy of her fame as a seat of literature and a seat of jurisprudence. A man of letters can here without difficulty obtain access to repositories filled with the wisdom of many ages and of many nations. But something was still wanting. We still wanted a library open to that large, that important, that respectable class which, though by no means destitute of liberal curiosity or of sensibility to literary pleasures, is yet forced to be content with what is written in our own tongue. For that class especially, I do not say exclusively, this library is intended. Our directors, I hope, will not be satisfied, I, as a member, shall certainly not be satisfied, till we possess a noble and complete collection of English books, till it is impossible to seek in vain on our shelves for a single English book which is valuable either on account of matter or on account of manner, which throws any light on our civil, ecclesiastical, intellectual, or social history, which, in short, can afford either useful instruction or harmless amusement.

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* Lord Morpeth.

From such a collection, placed within the reach of that large and valuable class which I have mentioned, I am disposed to expect great good. And when I say this, I do not take into the account those rare cases to which my valued friend, the Lord Provost,* so happily alluded. It is indeed not impossible that some man of genius who may enrich our literature with imperishable eloquence or song, or who may extend the empire of our race over matter, may feel in our reading room, for the first time the consciousness of powers yet undeveloped. It is not impossible that our volumes may suggest the first thought of something great to some future Burns, or Watt, or Arkwright. But I do not speak of these extraordinary cases. What I confidently anticipate is that, through the whole of that class whose benefit we have peculiarly in view, there will be a moral and an intellectual improvement; that many hours, which might otherwise be wasted in folly or in vice, will be employed in pursuits which, while they afford the highest and most lasting pleasure, are not only harmless, but purifying and elevating. My own experience, my own observation, justifies me in entertaining this hope. I have had opportunities, both in this and in other countries, of forming some estimate of the effect which is likely to be produced by a good collection of books on a society of young men. There is, I will venture to say, no judicious commanding officer of a regiment who will not tell you that the vicinity of a valuable library will improve perceptibly the whole character of a mess. I well knew one eminent military servant of the East India Company, a man of great and various accomplishments, a man honourably distinguished both in war and in diplomacy, a man who enjoyed the confidence of some of the greatest generals and statesmen of our time. When I asked him how, having left his country while still a boy, and having passed his youth at military stations in India, he had been able to educate himself, his answer was, that he had been stationed in the neighbourhood of an excellent library, that he had been allowed free access to the books, and that they had, at the most critical time of his life, decided his character, and saved him from being a mere smoking, card-playing, punch-drinking lounger.

Some of the objections which have been made to such institutions as ours have been so happily and completely refuted by my friend the Lord Provost, and by the Most Reverend Prelate who has honoured us with his presence this evening,† that it would be idle to say again what has been so well said. There is, however, one objection which, with your permission, I will notice. Some men, of whom I wish to speak with great respect, are haunted, as it seems to me, with an unreasonable fear of what they call superficial knowledge. Knowledge, they say, which really deserves the name, is a great blessing to mankind, the ally of virtue, the harbinger of freedom. But such knowledge must be profound. A crowd of people who have a smattering of mathematics, a smattering of astronomy, a smattering of chemistry, who have read a little poetry and a little history, is dangerous to the commonwealth. Such half-knowledge is worse than ignorance. And then the authority of Pope is vouched. Drink deep or taste not; shallow draughts intoxicate: drink largely; and that will sober you. I must confess that the danger which alarms these gentlemen never seemed to me very serious: and my reason is this; that I never could prevail on any person who pronounced superficial knowledge a curse, and profound knowledge a blessing, to tell me what was his standard of profundity. The argument proceeds on the supposition that there is some line between profound and superficial knowledge similar to that which separates truth from falsehood. I know of no such line. When we talk of men of deep science, do we mean that they have got to the bottom or near the bottom of science? Do we mean that they know all that is capable of being known? Do we mean even that they know, in their own especial department, all that the smatterers of the next generation will know? Why, if we compare the little truth that we know with the infinite mass of truth which we do not know, we are all shallow together; and the greatest philosophers that ever lived would be the first to confess their shallowness. If we could call up the first of human beings, if we could call up Newton, and ask him whether, even in those sciences in which he had no rival, he considered himself as profoundly knowing, he would have told us that he was but a smatterer like ourselves, and that the difference between his knowledge and ours vanished, when compared with the quantity of truth still undiscovered, just as the distance between a person at the foot of Ben Lomond and at the top of Ben Lomond vanishes when compared with the distance of the fixed stars.

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* Mr Adam Black.

† Archbishop Whateley.

It is evident then that those who are afraid of superficial knowledge do not mean by superficial knowledge knowledge which is superficial when compared with the whole quantity of truth capable of being known. For, in that sense, all human knowledge is, and always has been, and always must be, superficial. What then is the standard? Is it the same two years together in any country? Is it the same, at the same moment, in any two countries? Is it not notorious that the profundity of one age is the shallowness of the next; that the profundity of one nation is the shallowness of a neighbouring nation? Ramohun Roy passed, among Hindoos, for a man of profound Western learning; but he would have been but a very superficial member of this Institute. Strabo was justly entitled to be called a profound geographer eighteen hundred years ago. But a teacher of geography, who had never heard of America, would now be laughed at by the girls of a boarding-school. What would now be thought of the greatest chemist of 1746, or of the greatest geologist of 1746? The truth is that, in all experimental science, mankind is, of necessity, constantly advancing. Every generation, of course, has its front rank and its rear rank; but the rear rank of a later generation occupies the ground which was occupied by the front rank of a former generation.

You remember Gulliver's adventures. First he is shipwrecked in a country of little men; and he is a Colossus among them. He strides over the walls of their capital: he stands higher than the cupola of their great temple: he tugs after him a royal fleet: he stretches his legs; and a royal army, with drums beating and colours flying, marches through the gigantic arch: he devours a whole granary for breakfast, eats a herd of cattle for dinner, and washes down his meal with all the hogsheads of a cellar. In his next voyage he is among men sixty feet high. He who, in Lilliput, used to take people up in his hand in order that he might be able to hear them, is himself taken up in the hands and held to the ears of his masters. It is all that he can do to defend himself with his hanger against the rats and mice. The court ladies amuse themselves with seeing him fight wasps and frogs : the monkey runs off with him to the chimney top : the dwarf drops him into the cream jug and leaves him to swim for his life. Now, was Gulliver a tall or a short man? Why, in his own house at Rotherhithe, he was thought a man of the ordinary stature. Take him to Lilliput; and he is Quinbus Flestrin, the Man Mountain. Take him to Brobdingnag, and he is Grildrig, the little Manikin. It is the same in science. The pygmies of one society would have passed for giants in another.

It might be amusing to institute a comparison between one of the profoundly learned men of the thirteenth century and one of the superficial students who will frequent our library. Take the great philosopher of the time of Henry the Third of England, or Alexander the Third of Scotland, the man renowned all over the island, and even as far as Italy and Spain, as the first of astronomers and chemists. What is his astronomy? He is a firm believer in the Ptolemaic system. He never heard of the law of gravitation. Tell him that the succession of day and night is caused by the turning of the earth on its axis. Tell him that, in consequence of this motion, the polar diameter of the earth is shorter than the equatorial diameter. Tell him that the succession of summer and winter is caused by the revolution of the earth round the sun. If he does not set you down for an idiot, he lays an information against you before the Bishop, and has you burned for a heretic. To do him justice, however, if he is ill informed on these points, there are other points on which Newton and Laplace were mere children when compared with him. He can cast your nativity. He knows what will happen when Saturn is in the House of Life, and what will happen when Mars is in conjunction with the Dragon's Tail. He can read in the stars whether an expedition will be successful, whether the next harvest will be plentiful, which of your children will be fortunate in marriage, and which will be lost at sea. Happy the State, happy the family, which is guided by the counsels of so profound a man! And what but mischief, public and private, can we expect from the temerity and conceit of sciolists who know no more about the heavenly bodies than what they have learned from Sir John Herschel's beautiful little volume. But, to speak seriously, is not a little truth better than a great deal of falsehood? Is not the man who, in the evenings of a fortnight, has acquired a correct notion of the solar system, a more profound astronomer than a man who has passed thirty years in reading lectures about the *primum mobile*, and in drawing schemes of horoscopes?

Or take chemistry. Our philosopher of the thirteenth century shall be, if you please, an universal genius, chemist as well as astronomer. He has perhaps got so far as to know, that if he mixes charcoal and saltpetre in certain proportions and then applies fire, there will be an explosion which will shatter all his retorts and aludels; and he is proud of knowing what will in a later age be familiar to all the idle boys in the kingdom. But there are departments of science in which he need not fear the rivalry of Black, or Lavoisier, or Cavendish, or Davy. He is in hot pursuit of the philosopher's stone, of the stone that is to bestow wealth, and health, and longevity. He has a long array of strangely shaped vessels, filled with red oil and white oil, constantly boiling. The moment of projection is at hand; and soon all his kettles and gridirons will be turned into pure gold. Poor Professor Faraday can do nothing of the sort. I should deceive you if I held out to you the smallest hope that he will ever turn your halfpence into sovereigns. But if you can induce him to give at our Institute a course of lectures such as I once heard him give at the Royal Institution to children in the Christmas holidays, I can promise you that you will know more about the effects produced on bodies by heat and moisture than was known to some alchemists who, in the middle ages, were thought worthy of the patronage of kings.

As it has been in science so it has been in literature. Compare the literary acquirements of the great men of the thirteenth century with those which will be within the reach of many who will frequent our reading room. As to Greek learning, the profound man of the thirteenth century was absolutely on a par with the superficial man of the nineteenth. In the modern languages, there was not, six hundred years ago, a single volume which is now read. The library of our profound scholar must have consisted entirely of Latin books. We will suppose him to have had both a large and a choice collection. We will allow him thirty, nay forty manuscripts, and among them a Virgil, a Terence, a Lucan, an Ovid, a Statius, a great deal of Livy, a great deal of Cicero. In allowing him all this, we are dealing most liberally with him; for it is much more likely that his shelves were filled with treatises on school divinity and canon law, composed by writers whose names the world has very wisely forgotten. But, even if we suppose him to have possessed all that is most valuable in the literature of Rome, I say with perfect confidence that, both in respect of intellectual improvement, and in respect of intellectual pleasures, he was far less favourably situated than a man who now, knowing only the English language, has a bookcase filled with the best English works. Our great man of the Middle Ages could not form any conception of any tragedy approaching Macbeth or Lear, or of any comedy equal to Henry the Fourth or Twelfth Night. The best epic poem that he had read was far inferior to the Paradise Lost; and all the tomes of his philosophers were not worth a page of the Novum Organum.

The Novum Organum, it is true, persons who know only English must read in a translation: and this reminds me of one great advantage which such persons will derive from our Institution. They will, in our library, be able to form some acquaintance with the master minds of remote ages and foreign countries. A large part of what is best worth knowing in ancient literature, and in the literature of France, Italy, Germany, and Spain, has been translated into our own tongue. It is scarcely possible that the translation of any book of the highest class can be equal to the original. But, though the finer touches may be lost in the copy, the great outlines will remain. An Englishman who never saw the frescoes in the Vatican may yet, from engravings, form some notion of the exquisite grace of Raphael, and of the sublimity and energy of Michael Angelo. And so the genius of Homer is seen in the poorest version of the Iliad; the genius of Cervantes is seen in the poorest version of Don Quixote. Let it not be supposed that I wish to dissuade any person from studying either the ancient languages or the languages of modern Europe. Far from it. I prize most highly those keys of knowledge; and I think that no man who has leisure for study ought to be content until he possesses several of them. I always much admired a saying of the Emperor

Charles the Fifth. "When I learn a new language," he said, "I feel as if I had got a new soul." But I would console those who have not time to make themselves linguists by assuring them that, by means of their own mother tongue, they may obtain ready access to vast intellectual treasures, to treasures such as might have been envied by the greatest linguists of the age of Charles the Fifth, to treasures surpassing those which were possessed by Aldus, by Erasmus, and by Melancthon.

And thus I am brought back to the point from which I started. I have been requested to invite you to fill your glasses to the Literature of Britain; to that literature, the brightest, the purest, the most durable of all the glories of our country; to that literature, so rich in precious truth and precious fiction; to that literature which boasts of the prince of all poets and of the prince of all philosophers; to that literature which has exercised an influence wider than that of our commerce, and mightier than that of our arms; to that literature which has taught France the principles of liberty, and has furnished Germany with models of art; to that literature which forms a tie closer than the tie of consanguinity between us and the commonwealths of the valley of the Mississippi; to that literature before the light of which impious and cruel superstitions are fast taking flight on the banks of the Ganges; to that literature which will, in future ages, instruct and delight the unborn millions who will have turned the Australasian and Caffrarian deserts into cities and gardens. To the Literature of Britain, then! And, wherever British literature spreads, may it be attended by British virtue and by British freedom!

A SPEECH

Delivered in the House of Commons on the 18th of April 1847.

In the year 1847 the Government asked from the House of Commons a grant of one hundred thousand pounds for the education of the people. On the nineteenth of April, Lord John Russell, having explained the reasons for this application, moved the order of the day for a Committee of Supply. Mr Thomas Duncombe, Member for Finsbury, moved the following amendment: "That previous to any grant of public money being assented to by this House, for the purpose of carrying out the scheme of national education, as developed in the Minutes of the Committee of Council on Education in August and December last, which minutes have been presented to both Houses of Parliament by command of Her Majesty, a select Committee be appointed to inquire into the justice and expediency of such a scheme, and its probable annual cost; also to inquire whether the regulations attached thereto do not unduly increase the influence of the Crown, invade the constitutional functions of Parliament, and interfere with the religious convictions and civil rights of Her Majesty's subjects."

In opposition to this amendment, the following Speech was made. After a debate of three nights, Mr Thomas Duncombe obtained permission to withdraw the latter part of his amendment. The first part was put, and negatived by 372 votes to 47.

You will not wonder, Sir, that I am desirous to catch your eye this evening. The first duty which I performed, as a Member of the Committee of Council which is charged with the superintendence of public instruction, was to give my hearty assent to the plan which the honourable Member for Finsbury calls on the House to condemn. I am one of those who have been accused in every part of the kingdom, and who are now accused in Parliament, of aiming, under specious pretences, a blow at the civil and religious liberties of the people. It is natural therefore that I should seize the earliest opportunity of vindicating myself from so grave a charge.

The honourable Member for Finsbury must excuse me if, in the remarks which I have to offer to the House, I should not follow very closely the order of his speech. The truth is that a mere answer to his speech would be no defence of myself or of my colleagues. I am surprised, I own, that a man of his acuteness and ability should, on such an occasion, have made such a speech. The country is excited from one end to the other by a great question of principle. On that question the Government has taken one side. The honourable Member stands forth as the chosen and trusted champion of a great party which takes the other side. We expected to hear from him a full exposition of the views of those in whose name he speaks. But, to our astonishment, he has scarcely even alluded to the controversy which has divided the whole nation. He has entertained us with sarcasms and personal anecdotes: he has talked much about matters of mere detail: but I must say that, after listening with close attention to all that he has said, I am quite unable to discover whether, on the only important point which is in issue, he agrees with us or with that large and active body of Nonconformists which is diametrically opposed to us. He has sate down without dropping one word from which it is possible to discover whether he thinks that education is or that it is not a matter with which the State ought to interfere. Yet that is the question about which the whole nation has, during several weeks, been writing, reading, speaking, hearing, thinking, petitioning, and on which it is now the duty of Parliament to pronounce a decision. That question once settled, there will be, I believe, very little room for dispute. If it be not competent to the State to interfere with the education of the people, the mode of interference recommended by the Committee of Council must of course be condemned. If it be the right and the duty of the State to make provision for the education of the people, the objections made to our plan will, in a very few words, be shown to be frivolous.

I shall take a course very different from that which has been taken by the honourable gentleman. I shall in the clearest manner profess my opinion on that great question of principle which he has studiously evaded; and for my opinion I shall give what seem to me to be unanswerable reasons.

I believe, Sir, that it is the right and the duty of the State to provide means of education for the common people. This proposition seems to me to be implied in every definition that has ever yet been given of the functions of a government. About the extent of those functions there has been much difference of opinion among ingenious men. There are some who hold that it is the business of a government to meddle with every part of the system of human life, to regulate trade by bounties and prohibitions, to regulate expenditure by sumptuary laws, to regulate literature by a censorship, to regulate religion by an inquisition. Others go to the opposite extreme, and assign to government a very narrow sphere of action. But the very narrowest sphere that ever was assigned to governments by any school of political philosophy is quite wide enough for my purpose. On one point all the disputants are agreed. They unanimously acknowledge that it is the duty of every government to take order for giving security to the persons and property of the members of the community.

This being admitted, can it be denied that the education of the common people is a most effectual means of securing our persons and our property? Let Adam Smith answer that question for me. His authority, always high, is, on this subject, entitled to peculiar respect, because he extremely disliked busy, prying, interfering governments. He was for leaving literature, arts, sciences, to take care of themselves. He was not friendly to ecclesiastical establishments. He was of opinion, that the State ought not to meddle with the education of the rich. But he has expressly told us that a distinction is to be made, particularly in a commercial and highly civilised society, between the education of the rich and the education of the poor. The education of the poor, he says, is a matter which deeply concerns the commonwealth. Just as the magistrate ought to interfere for the purpose of preventing the leprosy from spreading among the people, he ought to interfere for the purpose of stopping the progress of the moral distempers which are inseparable from ignorance. Nor can this duty be neglected without danger to the public peace. If you leave the multitude uninstructed, there is serious risk that religious animosities may produce the most dreadful disorders. The most dreadful disorders! Those are Adam Smith's own words; and prophetic words they were. Scarcely had he given this warning to our rulers when his prediction was fulfilled in a manner never to be forgotten. I speak of the No Popery riots of 1780. I do not know that I could find in all history a stronger proof of the proposition, that the ignorance of the common people makes the property, the limbs, the lives of all classes insecure. Without the shadow of a grievance, at the summons of a madman, a hundred thousand people rise in insurrection. During a whole week, there is anarchy in the greatest and wealthiest of European cities. The parliament is besieged. Your predecessor sits trembling in his chair, and expects every moment to see the door beaten in by the ruffians whose roar he hears all round the house. The peers are pulled out of their coaches. The bishops in their lawn are forced to fly over the tiles. The chapels of foreign ambassadors, buildings made sacred by the law of nations, are destroyed. The house of the Chief Justice is demolished. The little children of the Prime Minister are taken out of their beds and laid in their night clothes on the table of the Horse Guards, the only safe asylum from the fury of the rabble. The prisons are opened. Highwaymen, housebreakers, murderers, come forth to swell the mob by which they have been set free. Thirty-six fires are blazing at once in London. Then comes the retribution. Count up all the wretches who were shot, who were hanged, who were crushed, who drank themselves to death at the rivers of gin which ran down Holborn Hill; and you will find that battles have been lost and won with a smaller sacrifice of life. And what was the cause of this calamity, a calamity which, in the history of London, ranks with the great plague and the great fire? The cause was the ignorance of a population which had been suffered, in the neighbourhood of palaces, theatres, temples, to grow up as rude and stupid as any tribe of tattooed cannibals in New Zealand, I might say as any drove of beasts in Smithfield Market.

The instance is striking: but it is not solitary. To the same cause are to be ascribed the riots of Nottingham, the sack of Bristol, all the outrages of Ludd, and Swing, and Rebecca, beautiful and costly machinery broken to pieces in Yorkshire, barns and haystacks blazing in Kent, fences and buildings pulled down in Wales. Could such things have been done in a country in which the mind of the labourer had been opened by education, in which he had been taught to find pleasure in the exercise of his intellect, taught to revere his Maker, taught to respect legitimate authority, and taught at the same time to seek the redress of real wrongs by peaceful and constitutional means?

This then is my argument. It is the duty of Government to protect our persons and property from danger. The gross ignorance of the common people is a principal cause of danger to our persons and property. Therefore, it is the duty of the Government to take care that the common people shall not be grossly ignorant.

And what is the alternative? It is universally allowed that, by some means, Government must protect our persons and property. If you take away education, what means do you leave? You leave means such as only necessity can justify, means which inflict a fearful amount of pain, not only on the guilty, but on the innocent who are connected with the guilty. You leave guns and bayonets, stocks and whipping-posts, treadmills, solitary cells, penal colonies, gibbets. See then how the case stands. Here is an end which, as we all agree, governments are bound to attain. There are only two ways of attaining it. One of those ways is by making men better, and wiser, and happier. The other way is by making them infamous and miserable. Can it be doubted which way we ought to prefer? Is it not strange, is it not almost incredible, that pious and benevolent men should gravely propound the doctrine that the magistrate is bound to punish and at the same time bound not to teach? To me it seems quite clear that whoever has a right to hang has a right to educate. Can we think without shame and remorse that more than half of those wretches who have been tied up at Newgate in our time might have been living happily, that more than half of those who are now in our gaols might have been enjoying liberty and using that liberty well, that such a hell on earth as Norfolk Island, need never have existed, if we had expended in training honest men but a small part of what we have expended in hunting and torturing rogues.

I would earnestly entreat every gentleman to look at a report which is contained in the Appendix to the First Volume of the Minutes of the Committee of Council. I speak of the report made by Mr Seymour Tremenheare on the state of that part of Monmouthshire which is inhabited by a population chiefly employed in mining. He found that, in this district, towards the close of 1839, out of eleven thousand children who were of an age to attend school, eight thousand never went to any school at all, and that most of the remaining three thousand might almost as well have gone to no school as to the squalid hovels in which men who ought themselves to have been learners pretended to teach. In general these men had only one qualification for their employment; and that was their utter unfitness for every other employment. They were disabled miners, or broken hucksters. In their schools all was stench, and noise, and confusion. Now and then the clamour of the boys was silenced for two minutes by the furious menaces of the master; but it soon broke out again. The instruction given was of the lowest kind. Not one school in ten was provided with a single map. This is the way in which you suffered the minds of a great population to be formed. And now for the effects of your negligence. The barbarian inhabitants of this region rise in an insane rebellion against the Government. They come pouring down their valleys to Newport. They fire on the Queen's troops. They wound a magistrate. The soldiers fire in return; and too many of these wretched men pay with their lives the penalty of their crime. But is the crime theirs alone? Is it strange that they should listen to the only teaching that they had? How can you, who took no pains to instruct them, blame them for giving ear to the demagogue who took pains to delude them? We put them down, of course. We punished them. We had no choice. Order must be maintained; property must be protected; and, since we had omitted to take the best way of keeping these people quiet, we were under the necessity of keeping them quiet by the dread of the sword and the halter. But could any necessity be more cruel? And which of us would run the risk of being placed under such necessity a second time?

I say, therefore, that the education of the people is not only a means, but the best means, of attaining that which all allow to be a chief end of government; and, if this be so, it passes my faculties to understand how any man can gravely contend that Government has nothing to do with the education of the people.

My confidence in my opinion is strengthened when I recollect that I hold that opinion in common with all the greatest lawgivers, statesmen, and political philosophers of all nations and ages, with all the most illustrious champions of civil and spiritual freedom, and especially with those men whose names were once held in the highest veneration by the Protestant Dissenters of England. I might cite many of the most venerable names of the old world; but I would rather cite the example of that country which the supporters of the Voluntary system here are always recommending to us as a pattern. Go back to the days when the little society which has expanded into the opulent and enlightened commonwealth of Massachusetts began to exist. Our modern Dissenters will scarcely, I think, venture to speak contumeliously of those Puritans whose spirit Laud and his High Commission Court could not subdue, of those Puritans who were willing to leave home and kindred, and all the comforts and refinements of civilised life, to cross the ocean, to fix their abode in forests among wild beasts and wild men, rather than commit the sin of performing, in the House of God, one gesture which they believed to be displeasing to Him. Did those brave exiles think it inconsistent with civil or religious freedom that the State should take charge of the education of the people? No, Sir; one of the earliest laws enacted by the Puritan colonists was that every township, as soon as the Lord had increased it to the number of fifty houses, should appoint one to teach all children to write and read, and that every township of a hundred houses should set up a grammar school. Nor have the descendants of those who made this law ever ceased to hold that the public authorities were bound to provide the means of public instruction. Nor is this doctrine confined to New England. "Educate the people" was the first admonition addressed by Penn to the colony which he founded. "Educate the people" was the legacy of Washington to the nation which he had saved. "Educate the people" was the unceasing exhortation of Jefferson; and I quote Jefferson with peculiar pleasure, because of all the eminent men that have ever lived, Adam Smith himself not excepted, Jefferson was the one who most abhorred everything like meddling on the part of governments. Yet the chief business of his later years was to establish a good system of State education in Virginia.

And, against such authority as this, what have you who take the other side to show? Can you mention a single great philosopher, a single man distinguished by his zeal for liberty, humanity, and truth, who, from the beginning of the world down to the time of this present Parliament, ever held your doctrines? You can oppose to the unanimous voice of all the wise and good, of all ages, and of both hemispheres, nothing but a clamour which was first heard a few months ago, a clamour in which you cannot join without condemning, not only all whose memory you profess to hold in reverence, but even your former selves.

This new theory of politics has at least the merit of originality. It may be fairly stated thus. All men have hitherto been utterly in the wrong as to the nature and objects of civil government. The great truth, hidden from every preceding generation, and at length revealed, in the year 1846, to some highly respectable ministers and elders of dissenting congregations, is this. Government is simply a great hangman. Government ought to do nothing except by harsh and degrading means. The one business of Government is to handcuff, and lock up, and scourge, and shoot, and stab, and strangle. It is odious tyranny in a government to attempt to prevent crime by informing the understanding and elevating the moral feeling of a people. A statesman may see hamlets turned, in the course of one generation, into great seaport towns and manufacturing towns. He may know that on the character of the vast population which is collected in those wonderful towns, depends the prosperity, the peace, the very existence of society. But he must not think of forming that character. He is an enemy of public liberty if he attempts to prevent those hundreds of thousands of his countrymen from becoming mere Yahoos. He may, indeed, build barrack after barrack to overawe them. If they break out into insurrection, he may send cavalry to sabre them: he may mow them down with grape shot: he may hang them, draw them, quarter them, anything but teach them. He may see, and may shudder as he sees, throughout large rural districts, millions of infants growing up from infancy to manhood as ignorant, as mere slaves of sensual appetite, as the beasts that perish. No matter. He is a traitor to the cause of civil and religious freedom if he does not look on with folded arms, while absurd hopes and evil passions ripen in that rank soil. He must wait for the day of his harvest. He must wait till the Jaquerie comes, till farm houses are burning, till threshing machines are broken in pieces; and then begins his business, which is simply to send one poor ignorant savage to the county gaol, and another to the antipodes, and a third to the gallows.

Such, Sir, is the new theory of government which was first propounded, in the year 1846, by some men of high note among the Nonconformists of England. It is difficult to understand how men of excellent abilities and excellent intentions—and there are, I readily admit, such men among those who hold this theory—can have fallen into so absurd and pernicious an error. One explanation only occurs to me. This is, I am inclined to believe, an instance of the operation of the great law of reaction. We have just come victorious out of a long and fierce contest for the liberty of trade. While that contest was undecided, much was said and written about the advantages of free competition, and about the danger of suffering the State to regulate matters which should be left to individuals. There has consequently arisen in the minds of persons who are led by words, and who are little in the habit of making distinctions, a disposition to apply to political questions and moral questions principles which are sound only when applied to commercial questions. These people, not content with having forced the Government to surrender a province wrongfully usurped, now wish to wrest from the Government a domain held by a right which was never before questioned, and which cannot be questioned with the smallest show of reason. "If," they say, "free competition is a good thing in trade, it must surely be a good thing in education. The supply of other commodities, of sugar, for example, is left to adjust itself to the demand; and the consequence is, that we are better supplied with sugar than if the Government undertook to supply us. Why then should we doubt that the supply of instruction will, without the intervention of the Government, be found equal to the demand?"

Never was there a more false analogy. Whether a man is well supplied with sugar is a matter which concerns himself alone. But whether he is well supplied with instruction is a matter which concerns his neighbours and the State. If he cannot afford to pay for sugar, he must go without sugar. But it is by no means fit that, because he cannot afford to pay for education, he should go without education. Between the rich and their instructors there may, as Adam Smith says, be free trade. The supply of music masters and Italian masters may be left to adjust itself to the demand. But what is to become of the millions who are too poor to procure without assistance the services of a decent schoolmaster? We have indeed heard it said that even these millions will be supplied with teachers by the free competition of benevolent individuals who will vie with each other in rendering this service to mankind. No doubt there are many benevolent individuals who spend their time and money most laudably in setting up and supporting schools; and you may say, if you please, that there is, among these respectable persons, a competition to do good. But do not be imposed upon by words. Do not believe that this competition resembles the competition which is produced by the desire of wealth and by the fear of ruin. There is a great difference, be assured, between the rivalry of philanthropists and the rivalry of grocers. The grocer knows that, if his wares are worse than those of other grocers, he shall soon go before the Bankrupt Court, and his wife and children will have no refuge but the workhouse: he knows that, if his shop obtains an honourable celebrity, he shall be able to set up a carriage and buy a villa: and this knowledge impels him to exertions compared with which the exertions of even very charitable people to serve the poor are but languid. It would be strange infatuation indeed to legislate on the supposition that a man cares for his fellow creatures as much as he cares for himself.

Unless, Sir, I greatly deceive myself, those arguments, which show that the Government ought not to leave to private people the task of providing for the national defence, will equally show that the Government ought not to leave to private people the task of providing for national education. On this subject, Mr Hume has laid down the general law with admirable good sense and perspicuity. I mean David Hume, not the Member for Montrose, though that honourable gentleman will, I am confident, assent to the doctrine propounded by his illustrious namesake. David Hume, Sir, justly says that most of the arts and trades which exist in the world produce so much advantage and pleasure to individuals, that the magistrate may safely leave it to individuals to encourage those arts and trades. But he adds that there are callings which, though they are highly useful, nay, absolutely necessary to society, yet do not administer to the peculiar pleasure or profit of any individual. The military calling is an instance. Here, says Hume, the Government must interfere. It must take on itself to regulate these callings, and to stimulate the industry of the persons who follow these callings by pecuniary and honorary rewards.

Now, Sir, it seems to me that, on the same principle on which Government ought to superintend and to reward the soldier, Government ought to superintend and to reward the schoolmaster. I mean, of course, the schoolmaster of the common people. That his calling is useful, that his calling is necessary, will hardly be denied. Yet it is clear that his services will not be adequately remunerated if he is left to be remunerated by those whom he teaches, or by the voluntary contributions of the charitable. Is this disputed? Look at the facts. You tell us that schools will multiply and flourish exceedingly, if the Government will only abstain from interfering with them. Has not the Government long abstained from interfering with them? Has not everything been left, through many years, to individual exertion? If it were true that education, like trade, thrives most where the magistrate meddles least, the common people of England would now be the best educated in the world. Our schools would be model schools. Every one would have a well chosen little library, excellent maps, a small but neat apparatus for experiments in natural philosophy. A grown person unable to read and write would be pointed at like Giant O'Brien or the Polish Count. Our schoolmasters would be as eminently expert in all that relates to teaching as our cutlers, our cotton-spinners, our engineers are allowed to be in their respective callings. They would, as a class, be held in high consideration; and their gains would be such that it would be easy to find men of respectable character and attainments to fill up vacancies.

Now, is this the case? Look at the charges of the judges, at the resolutions of the grand juries, at the reports of public officers, at the reports of voluntary associations. All tell the same sad and ignominious story. Take the reports of the Inspectors of Prisons. In the House of Correction at Hertford, of seven hundred prisoners one half could not read at all; only eight could read and write well. Of eight thousand prisoners who had passed through Maidstone Gaol only fifty could read and write well. In Coldbath Fields Prison, the proportion that could read and write well seems to have been still smaller. Turn from the registers of prisoners to the registers of marriages. You will find that about a hundred and thirty thousand couples were married in the year 1844. More than forty thousand of the bridegrooms and more than sixty thousand of the brides did not sign their names, but made their marks. Nearly one third of the men and nearly one half of the women, who are in the prime of life, who are to be the parents of the Englishmen of the next generation, who are to bear a chief part in forming the minds of the Englishmen of the next generation, cannot write their own names. Remember, too, that, though people who cannot write their own names must be grossly ignorant, people may write their own names and yet have very little knowledge. Tens of thousands who were able to write their names had in all probability received only the wretched education of a common day school. We know what such a school too often is; a room crusted with filth, without light, without air, with a heap of fuel in one corner and a brood of chickens in another; the only machinery of instruction a dogeared spelling-book and a broken slate; the masters the refuse of all other callings, discarded footmen, ruined pedlars, men who cannot work a sum in the rule of three, men who cannot write a common letter without blunders, men who do not know whether the earth is a sphere or a cube, men who do not know whether Jerusalem is in Asia or

America. And to such men, men to whom none of us would entrust the key of his cellar, we have entrusted the mind of the rising generation, and, with the mind of the rising generation the freedom, the happiness, the glory of our country.

Do you question the accuracy of this description? I will produce evidence to which I am sure that you will not venture to take an exception. Every gentleman here knows, I suppose, how important a place the Congregational Union holds among the Nonconformists, and how prominent a part Mr Edward Baines has taken in opposition to State education. A Committee of the Congregational Union drew up last year a report on the subject of education. That report was received by the Union; and the person who moved that it should be received was Mr Edward Baines. That report contains the following passage: "If it were necessary to disclose facts to such an assembly as this, as to the ignorance and debasement of the neglected portions of our population in towns and rural districts, both adult and juvenile, it could easily be done. Private information communicated to the Board, personal observation and investigation of the various localities, with the published documents of the Registrar General, and the reports of the state of prisons in England and Wales, published by order of the House of Commons, would furnish enough to make us modest in speaking of what has been done for the humbler classes, and make us ashamed that the sons of the soil of England should have been so long neglected, and should present to the enlightened traveller from other shores such a sad spectacle of neglected cultivation, lost mental power, and spiritual degradation." Nothing can be more just. All the information which I have been able to obtain bears out the statements of the Congregational Union. I do believe that the ignorance and degradation of a large part of the community to which we belong ought to make us ashamed of ourselves. I do believe that an enlightened traveller from New York, from Geneva, or from Berlin, would be shocked to see so much barbarism in the close neighbourhood of so much wealth and civilisation. But is it not strange that the very gentlemen who tell us in such emphatic language that the people are shamefully ill-educated, should yet persist in telling us that under a system of free competition the people are certain to be excellently educated? Only this morning the opponents of our plan circulated a paper in which they confidently predict that free competition will do all that is necessary, if we will only wait with patience. Wait with patience! Why, we have been waiting ever since the Heptarchy. How much longer are we to wait? Till the year 2847? Or till the year 3847? That the experiment has as yet failed you do not deny. And why should it have failed? Has it been tried in unfavourable circumstances? Not so: it has been tried in the richest and in the freest, and in the most charitable country in all Europe. Has it been tried on too small a scale? Not so: millions have been subjected to it. Has it been tried during too short a time? Not so: it has been going on during ages. The cause of the failure then is plain. Our whole system has been unsound. We have applied the principle of free competition to a case to which that principle is not applicable.

But, Sir, if the state of the southern part of our island has furnished me with one strong argument, the state of the northern part furnishes me with another argument, which is, if possible, still more decisive. A hundred and fifty years ago England was one of the best governed and most prosperous countries in the world: Scotland was perhaps the rudest and poorest country that could lay any claim to civilisation. The name of Scotchman was then uttered in this part of the island with contempt. The ablest Scotch statesmen contemplated the degraded state of their poorer countrymen with a feeling approaching to despair. It is well known that Fletcher of Saltoun, a brave and accomplished man, a man who had drawn his sword for liberty, who had suffered proscription and exile for liberty, was so much disgusted and dismayed by the misery, the ignorance, the idleness, the lawlessness of the common people, that he proposed to make many thousands of them slaves. Nothing, he thought, but the discipline which kept order and enforced exertion among the negroes of a sugar colony, nothing but the lash and the stocks, could reclaim the vagabonds who infested every part of Scotland from their indolent and predatory habits, and compel them to support themselves by steady labour. He therefore, soon after the Revolution, published a pamphlet, in which he earnestly, and, as I believe, from the mere impulse of humanity and patriotism, recommended to the Estates of the Realm this sharp remedy, which alone, as he conceived, could remove the evil. Within a few months after the publication of that pamphlet a very different remedy was applied. The Parliament which sate at Edinburgh passed an act for the establishment of parochial schools. What followed? An improvement such as the world had never seen took place in the moral and intellectual character of the people. Soon, in spite of the rigour of the climate, in spite of the sterility of the earth, Scotland became a country which had no reason to envy the fairest portions of the globe. Wherever the Scotchman went, — and there were few parts of the world to which he did not go,—he carried his superiority with him. If he was admitted into a public office, he worked his way up to the highest post. If he got employment in a brewery or a factory, he was soon the foreman. If he took a shop, his trade was the best in the street. If he enlisted in the army, he became a colour-sergeant. If he went to a colony, he was the most thriving planter there. The Scotchman of the seventeenth century had been spoken of in London as we speak of the Esquimaux. The Scotchman of the eighteenth century was an object, not of scorn, but of envy. The cry was that, wherever he came, he got more than his share; that, mixed with Englishmen or mixed with Irishmen, he rose to the top as surely as oil rises to the top of water. And what had produced this great revolution? The Scotch air was still as cold, the Scotch rocks were still as bare as ever. All the natural qualities of the Scotchman were still what they had been when learned and benevolent men advised that he should be flogged, like a beast of burden, to his daily task. But the State had given him an education. That education was not, it is true, in all respects what it should have been. But such as it was, it had done more for the bleak and dreary shores of the Forth and the Clyde than the richest of soils and the most genial of climates had done for Capua and Tarentum. Is there one member of this House, however strongly he may hold the doctrine that the Government ought not to interfere with the education of the people, who will stand up and say that, in his opinion, the Scotch would now have been a happier and a more enlightened people if they had been left, during the last five generations, to find instruction for themselves?

I say then, Sir, that, if the science of Government be an experimental science, this question is decided. We are in a condition to perform the inductive process according to the rules laid down in the Novum Organum. We have two nations closely connected, inhabiting the same island, sprung from the same blood, speaking the same language, governed by the same Sovereign and the same Legislature, holding essentially the same religious faith, having the same allies and the same enemies. Of these two nations one was, a hundred and fifty years ago, as respects opulence and civilisation, in the highest rank among European communities, the other in the lowest rank. The opulent and highly civilised nation leaves the education of the people to free competition. In the poor and half barbarous nation the education of the people is undertaken by the State. The result is that the first are last and the last first. The common people of Scotland,—it is vain to disguise the truth,—have passed the common people of England. Free competition, tried with every advantage, has produced effects of which, as the Congregational Union tells us, we ought to be ashamed, and which must lower us in the opinion of every intelligent foreigner. State education, tried under every disadvantage, has produced an improvement to which it would be difficult to find a parallel in any age or country. Such an experiment as this would be regarded as conclusive in surgery or chemistry, and ought, I think, to be regarded as equally conclusive in politics.

These, Sir, are the reasons which have satisfied me that it is the duty of the State to educate the people. Being firmly convinced of that truth, I shall not shrink from proclaiming it here and elsewhere, in defiance of the loudest clamour that agitators can raise. The remainder of my task is easy. For, if the great principle for which I have been contending is admitted, the objections which have been made to the details of our plan will vanish fast. I will deal with those objections in the order in which they stand in the amendment moved by the honourable Member for Finsbury.

First among his objections he places the cost. Surely, Sir, no person who admits that it is our duty to train the minds of the rising generation can think a hundred thousand pounds too large a sum for that purpose. If we look at the matter in the lowest point of view, if we consider human beings merely as producers of wealth, the difference between an intelligent and a stupid population, estimated in pounds, shillings, and pence, exceeds a hundredfold the proposed outlay. Nor is this all. For every pound that you save in education, you will spend five in prosecutions, in prisons, in penal settlements. I cannot believe that the House, having never grudged anything that was asked for the purpose of maintaining order and protecting property by means of pain and fear, will begin to be niggardly as soon as it is proposed to effect the same objects by making the people wiser and better.

The next objection made by the honourable Member to our plan is that it will increase the influence of the Crown. This sum of a hundred thousand pounds may, he apprehends, be employed in corruption and jobbing. Those schoolmasters who vote for ministerial candidates will obtain a share of the grant: those schoolmasters who vote for opponents of the ministry will apply for assistance in vain. Sir, the honourable Member never would have made this objection if he had taken the trouble to understand the minutes which he has condemned. We propose to place this part of the public expenditure under checks which must make such abuses as the honourable Member anticipates morally impossible. Not only will there be those ordinary checks which are thought sufficient to prevent the misapplication of the many millions annually granted for the army, the navy, the ordnance, the civil government: not only must the Ministers of the Crown come every year to this

House for a vote, and be prepared to render an account of the manner in which they have laid out what had been voted in the preceding year, but, when they have satisfied the House, when they have got their vote, they will still be unable to distribute the money at their discretion. Whatever they may do for any schoolmaster must be done in concert with those persons who, in the district where the schoolmaster lives, take an interest in education, and contribute out of their private means to the expense of education. When the honourable gentleman is afraid that we shall corrupt the schoolmasters, he forgets, first, that we do not appoint the schoolmasters; secondly, that we cannot dismiss the schoolmasters; thirdly, that managers who are altogether independent of us can, without our consent, dismiss the schoolmasters; and, fourthly, that without the recommendation of those managers we can give nothing to the schoolmasters. Observe, too, that such a recommendation will not be one of those recommendations which goodnatured easy people are too apt to give to everybody who asks; nor will it at all resemble those recommendations which the Secretary of the Treasury is in the habit of receiving. For every pound which we pay on the recommendation of the managers, the managers themselves must pay two pounds. They must also provide the schoolmaster with a house out of their own funds before they can obtain for him a grant from the public funds. What chance of jobbing is there here? It is common enough, no doubt, for a Member of Parliament who votes with Government to ask that one of those who zealously supported him at the last election may have a place in the Excise or the Customs. But such a member would soon cease to solicit if the answer were, "Your friend shall have a place of fifty pounds a year, if you will give him a house and settle on him an income of a hundred a year." What chance then, I again ask, is there of jobbing? What, say some of the dissenters of Leeds, is to prevent a Tory Government, a High Church Government, from using this parliamentary grant to corrupt the schoolmasters of our borough, and to induce them to use all their influence in favour of a Tory and High Church candidate? Why, Sir, the dissenters of Leeds themselves have the power to prevent it. Let them subscribe to the schools: let them take a share in the management of the schools: let them refuse to recommend to the Committee of Council any schoolmaster whom they suspect of having voted at any election from corrupt motives: and the thing is done. Our plan, in truth, is made up of checks. My only doubt is whether the checks may not be found too numerous and too stringent. On our general conduct there is the ordinary check, the parliamentary check. And, as respects those minute details which it is impossible that this House can investigate, we shall be checked, in every town and in every rural district, by boards consisting of independent men zealous in the cause of education.

The truth is, Sir, that those who clamour most loudly against our plan, have never thought of ascertaining what it is. I see that a gentleman, who ought to have known better, has not been ashamed publicly to tell the world that our plan will cost the nation two millions a year, and will paralyse all the exertions of individuals to educate the people. These two assertions are uttered in one breath. And yet, if he who made them had read our minutes before he railed at them, he would have seen that his predictions are contradictory; that they cannot both be fulfilled; that, if individuals do not exert themselves, the country will have to pay nothing; and that, if the country has to pay two millions, it will be because individuals have exerted themselves with such wonderful, such incredible vigour, as to raise four millions by voluntary contributions.

The next objection made by the honourable Member for Finsbury is that we have acted unconstitutionally, and have encroached on the functions of Parliament. The Committee of Council he seems to consider as an unlawful assembly. He calls it sometimes a self-elected body and sometimes a self-appointed body. Sir, these are words without meaning. The Committee is no more a self-elected body than the Board of Trade. It is a body appointed by the Queen; and in appointing it Her Majesty has exercised, under the advice of her responsible Ministers, a prerogative as old as the monarchy. But, says the honourable Member, the constitutional course would have been to apply for an Act of Parliament. On what ground? Nothing but an Act of Parliament can legalise that which is illegal. But whoever heard of an Act of Parliament to legalise what was already beyond all dispute legal? Of course, if we wished to send aliens out of the country, or to retain disaffected persons in custody without bringing them to trial, we must obtain an Act of Parliament empowering us to do so. But why should we ask for an Act of Parliament to empower us to do what anybody may do, what the honourable Member for Finsbury may do? Is there any doubt that he or anybody else may subscribe to a school, give a stipend to a monitor, or settle a retiring pension on a preceptor who has done good service? What any of the Queen's subjects may do the Queen may do. Suppose that her privy purse were so large that she could afford to employ a hundred thousand pounds in this beneficent manner; would an Act of Parliament be necessary to enable her to do so? Every part of our plan may lawfully be carried into execution by any person, Sovereign or subject, who has the inclination and the money. We have not the money; and for the money we come, in a strictly constitutional manner, to the House of Commons. The course which we have taken is in conformity with all precedent, as well as with all principle. There are military schools. No Act of Parliament was necessary to authorise the establishing of such schools. All that was necessary was a grant of money to defray the charge. When I was Secretary at War it was my duty to bring under Her Majesty's notice the situation of the female children of her soldiers. Many such children accompanied every regiment, and their education was grievously neglected. Her Majesty was graciously pleased to sign a warrant by which a girls' school was attached to each corps. No Act of Parliament was necessary. For to set up a school where girls might be taught to read, and write, and sew, and cook, was perfectly legal already. I might have set it up myself, if I had been rich enough. All that I had to ask from Parliament was the money. But I ought to beg pardon for arguing a point so clear.

The next objection to our plans is that they interfere with the religious convictions of Her Majesty's subjects. It has been sometimes insinuated, but it has never been proved, that the Committee of Council has shown undue favour to the Established Church. Sir, I have carefully read and considered the minutes; and I wish that every man who has exerted his eloquence against them had done the same. I say that I have carefully read and considered them, and that they seem to me to have been drawn up with exemplary impartiality. The benefits which we offer we offer to people of all religious persuasions alike. The dissenting managers of schools will have equal authority with the managers who belong to the Church. A boy who goes to meeting will be just as eligible to be a monitor, and will receive just as large a stipend, as if he went to the cathedral. The schoolmaster who is a nonconformist and the schoolmaster who is a conformist will enjoy the same emoluments, and will, after the same term of service, obtain, on the same conditions, the same retiring pension. I wish that some gentleman would, instead of using vague phrases about religious liberty and the rights of conscience, answer this plain question. Suppose that in one of our large towns there are four schools, a school connected with the Church, a school connected with the Independents, a Baptist school, and a Wesleyan school; what encouragement, pecuniary or honorary, will, by our plan, be given to the school connected with the Church, and withheld from any of the other three schools? Is it not indeed plain that, if by neglect or maladministration the Church school should get into a bad state, while the dissenting schools flourish, the dissenting schools will receive public money and the Church school will receive none?

It is true, I admit, that in rural districts which are too poor to support more than one school, the religious community to which the majority belongs will have an advantage over other religious communities. But this is not our fault. If we are as impartial as it is possible to be, you surely do not expect more. If there should be a parish containing nine hundred churchmen and a hundred dissenters, if there should, in that parish, be a school connected with the Church, if the dissenters in that parish should be too poor to set up another school, undoubtedly the school connected with the Church will, in that parish, get all that we give; and the dissenters will get nothing. But observe that there is no partiality to the Church, as the Church, in this arrangement. The churchmen get public money, not because they are churchmen, but because they are the majority. The dissenters get nothing, not because they are dissenters, but because they are a small minority. There are districts where the case will be reversed, where there will be dissenting schools, and no Church schools. In such cases the dissenters will get what we have to give, and the churchmen will get nothing.

But, Sir, I ought not to say that a churchman gets nothing by a system which gives a good education to dissenters, or that a dissenter gets nothing by a system which gives a good education to churchmen. We are not, I hope, so much conformists, or so much nonconformists, as to forget that we are Englishmen and Christians. We all, Churchmen, Presbyterians, Independents, Baptists, Methodists, have an interest in this, that the great body of the people should be rescued from ignorance and barbarism. I mentioned Lord George Gordon's mob. That mob began, it is true, with the Roman Catholics: but, long before the tumults were over, there was not a respectable Protestant in London who was not in fear for his house, for his limbs, for his life, for the lives of those who were dearest to him. The honourable Member for Finsbury says that we call on men to pay for an education from which they derive no benefit. I deny that there is one honest and industrious man in the country who derives no benefit from living among honest and industrious neighbours rather than among rioters and vagabonds. This matter is as much a matter of common concern as the defence of our coast. Suppose that I were to say, "Why do you tax me to fortify Portsmouth? If the people of Portsmouth think that they cannot be safe without bastions and ravelins, let the people of Portsmouth pay the engineers and masons. Why am I to bear the charge of works from which I derive no advantage?" You would answer, and most justly, that there is no man in the island who does not derive advantage from these works, whether he resides within them or not. And, as every man, in whatever part of the island he may live, is bound to contribute to the support of those arsenals which are necessary for our common security, so is every man, to whatever sect he may belong, bound to contribute to the support of those schools on which, not less than on our arsenals, our common security depends.

I now come to the last words of the amendment. The honourable Member for Finsbury is apprehensive that our plan may interfere with the civil rights of Her Majesty's subjects. How a man's civil rights can be prejudiced by his learning to read and write, to multiply and divide, or even by his obtaining some knowledge of history and geography, I do not very well apprehend. One thing is clear, that persons sunk in that ignorance in which, as we are assured by the Congregational Union, great numbers of our countrymen are sunk, can be free only in name. It is hardly necessary for us to appoint a Select Committee for the purpose of inquiring whether knowledge be the ally or the enemy of liberty. He is, I must say, but a short-sighted friend of the common people who is eager to bestow on them a franchise which would make them all-powerful, and yet would withhold from them that instruction without which their power must be a curse to themselves and to the State.

This, Sir, is my defence. From the clamour of our accusers I appeal with confidence to the country to which we must, in no long time, render an account of our stewardship. I appeal with still more confidence to future generations, which, while enjoying all the blessings of an impartial and efficient system of public instruction, will find it difficult to believe that the authors of that system should have had to struggle with a vehement and pertinacious opposition, and still more difficult to believe that such an opposition was offered in the name of civil and religious freedom.

A SPEECH

DELIVERED AT THE COLLEGE OF GLASGOW ON THE 21ST OF MARCH, 1849.

At the election of Lord Rector of the University of Glasgow, in November, 1848, the votes stood thus: Mr Macaulay, 255; Colonel Mure, 203. The installation took place on the twenty-first of March, 1849; and after that ceremony had been performed, the following Speech was delivered.

MY first duty, Gentlemen, is to return you my thanks for the honour which you have conferred on me. You well know that it was wholly unsolicited; and I can assure you that it was wholly unexpected. I may add that, if I had been invited to become a candidate for your suffrages, I should respectfully have declined the invitation. My predecessor, whom I am so happy as to be able to call my friend, declared from this place last year in language which well became him, that he would not have come forward to displace so eminent a statesman as Lord John Russell. I can with equal truth affirm that I would not have come forward to displace so estimable a gentlemen and so accomplished a scholar as Colonel

Mure. But Colonel Mure felt last year that it was not for him, and I now feel that it is not for me, to question the propriety of your decision on a point of which, by the constitution of your body, you are the judges. I therefore gratefully accept the office to which I have been called, fully purposing to use whatever powers belong to it with a single view to the welfare and credit of your society.

I am not using a mere phrase of course, when I say that the feelings with which I bear a part in the ceremony of this day are such as I find it difficult to utter in words. I do not think it strange that, when that great master of eloquence, Edmund Burke, stood where I now stand, he faltered and remained mute. Doubtless the multitude of thoughts which rushed into his mind was such as even he could not easily arrange or express. In truth there are few spectacles more striking or affecting than that which a great historical place of education presents on a solemn public day. There is something strangely interesting in the contrast between the venerable antiquity of the body and the fresh and ardent youth of the great majority of the members. Recollections and hopes crowd upon us together. The past and the future are at once brought close to us. Our thoughts wander back to the time when the foundations of this ancient building were laid, and forward to the time when those whom it is our office to guide and to teach will be the guides and teachers of our posterity. On the present occasion we may, with peculiar propriety, give such thoughts their course. For it has chanced that my magistracy has fallen on a great secular epoch. This is the four hundredth year of the existence of your University. At such jubilees, jubilees of which no individual sees more than one, it is natural, and it is good, that a society like this, a society which survives all the transitory parts of which it is composed, a society which has a corporate existence and a perpetual succession, should review its annals, should retrace the stages of its growth from infancy to maturity, and should try to find, in the experience of generations which have passed away, lessons which may be profitable to generations yet unborn.

The retrospect is full of interest and instruction. Perhaps it may be doubted whether, since the Christian era, there has been any point of time more important to the highest interests of mankind than that at which the existence of your University commenced. It was at the moment of a great destruction and of a great creation. Your society was instituted just before the empire of the East perished; that strange empire which, dragging on a languid life through the great age of darkness, connected together the two great ages of light; that empire which, adding nothing to our stores of knowledge, and producing not one man great in letters, in science, or in art, yet preserved, in the midst of barbarism, those masterpieces of Attic genius, which the highest minds still contemplate, and long will contemplate, with admiring despair. And at that very time, while the fanatical Moslem were plundering the churches and palaces of Constantinople, breaking in pieces Grecian sculptures, and giving to the flames piles of Grecian eloquence, a few humble German artisans, who little knew that they were calling into existence a power far mightier than that of the victorious Sultan, were busied in cutting and setting the first types. The University came into existence just in time to witness the disappearance of the last trace of the Roman empire, and to witness the publication of the earliest printed book.

At this conjuncture, a conjuncture of unrivalled interest in the history of letters, a man, never to be mentioned without reverence by every lover of letters, held the highest place in Europe. Our just attachment to that Protestant faith to which our country owes so much must not prevent us from paying the tribute which, on this occasion, and in this place, justice and gratitude demand, to the founder of the University of Glasgow, the greatest of the restorers of learning, Pope Nicholas the Fifth. He had sprung from the common people; but his abilities and his erudition had early attracted the notice of the great. He had studied much and travelled far. He had visited Britain, which, in wealth and refinement, was to his native Tuscany what the back settlements of America now are to Britain. He had lived with the merchant princes of Florence, those men who first ennobled trade by making trade the ally of philosophy, of eloquence, and of taste. It was he who, under the protection of the munificent and discerning Cosmo, arranged the first public library that Modern Europe possessed. From privacy your founder rose to a throne; but on the throne he never forgot the studies which had been his delight in privacy. He was the centre of an illustrious group, composed partly of the last great scholars of Greece, and partly of the first great scholars of Italy, Theodore Gaza and George of Trebizond, Bessarion and Filelfo, Marsilio Ficino and Poggio Bracciolini. By him was founded the Vatican library, then and long after the most precious and the most extensive collection of books in the world. By him were carefully preserved the most valuable intellectual treasures which had been snatched from the wreck of the Byzantine empire. His agents were to be found everywhere, in the bazaars of the farthest East, in the monasteries of the farthest West, purchasing or copying worm-eaten parchments, on which were traced words worthy of immortality. Under his patronage were prepared accurate Latin versions of many precious remains of Greek poets and philosophers. But no department of literature owes so much to him as history. By him were introduced to the knowledge of Western Europe two great and unrivalled models of historical composition, the work of Herodotus and the work of Thucydides. By him, too, our ancestors were first made acquainted with the graceful and lucid simplicity of Xenophon and with the manly good sense of Polybius.

It was while he was occupied with cares like these that his attention was called to the intellectual wants of this region, a region now swarming with population, rich with culture, and resounding with the clang of machinery, a region which now sends forth fleets laden with its admirable fabrics to the lands of which, in his days, no geographer had ever heard, then a wild, a poor, a half barbarous tract, lying on the utmost verge of the known world. He gave his sanction to the plan of establishing a University at Glasgow, and bestowed on the new seat of learning all the privileges which belonged to the University of Bologna. I can conceive that a pitying smile passed over his face as he named Bologna and Glasgow together. At Bologna he had long studied. No spot in the world had been more favoured by nature or by art. The surrounding country was a fruitful and sunny country, a country of cornfields and vineyards. In the city, the house of Bentivoglio bore rule, a house which vied with the house of Medici in taste and magnificence, which has left to posterity noble palaces and temples, and which gave a splendid patronage to arts and letters. Glasgow your founder just knew to be a poor, a small, a rude town, a town, as he would have thought, not likely ever to be great and opulent; for the soil, compared with the rich country at the foot of the Apennines, was barren, and the climate was such that an Italian shuddered at the thought of it. But it is not on the fertility of the soil, it is not on the mildness of the atmosphere, that the prosperity of nations chiefly depends. Slavery and superstition can make Campania a land of beggars, and can change the plain of Enna into a desert. Nor is it beyond the power of human intelligence and energy, developed by civil and spiritual freedom, to turn sterile rocks and pestilential marshes into cities and gardens. Enlightened as your founder was, he little knew that he was himself a chief agent in a great revolution, physical and moral, political and religious, in a revolution destined to make the last first and the first last, in a revolution destined to invert the relative positions of Glasgow and Bologna. We cannot, I think, better employ a few minutes than in reviewing the stages of this great change in human affairs.

The review shall be short. Indeed I cannot do better than pass rapidly from century to century. Look at the world, then, a hundred years after the seal of Nicholas had been affixed to the instrument which called your College into existence. We find Europe, we find Scotland especially, in the agonies of that great revolution which we emphatically call the Reformation. The liberal patronage which Nicholas, and men like Nicholas, had given to learning, and of which the establishment of this seat of learning is not the least remarkable instance, had produced an effect which they had never contemplated. Ignorance was the talisman on which their power depended; and that talisman they had themselves broken. They had called in Knowledge as a handmaid to decorate Superstition, and their error produced its natural effect. I need not tell you what a part the votaries of classical learning, and especially the votaries of Greek learning, the Humanists, as they were then called, bore in the great movement against spiritual tyranny. They formed, in fact, the vanguard of that movement. Every one of the chief Reformers—I do not at this moment remember a single exception—was a Humanist. Almost every eminent Humanist in the north of Europe was, according to the measure of his uprightness and courage, a Reformer. In a Scottish University I need hardly mention the names of Knox, of Buchanan, of Melville, of Secretary Maitland. In truth, minds daily nourished with the best literature of Greece and Rome necessarily grew too strong to be trammelled by the cobwebs of the scholastic divinity; and the influence of such minds was now rapidly felt by the whole community; for the invention of printing had brought books within the reach even of yeomen and of artisans. From the Mediterranean to the Frozen Sea, therefore, the public mind was everywhere in a ferment; and nowhere was the ferment greater than in Scotland. It was in the midst of martyrdoms and proscriptions, in the midst of a war between power and truth, that the first century of the existence of your University closed.

Pass another hundred years; and we are in the midst of another revolution. The war between Popery and Protestantism had, in this island, been terminated by the victory of Protestantism. But from that war another war had sprung, the war between Prelacy and Puritanism. The hostile religious sects were allied, intermingled, confounded with hostile political parties. The monarchical element of the constitution was an object of almost exclusive devotion to the Prelatist. The popular element of the constitution was especially dear to the Puritan. At length an appeal was made to the sword. Puritanism triumphed; but Puritanism was already divided against itself. Independency and Republicanism were on one side, Presbyterianism and limited Monarchy on the other. It was in the very darkest part of that dark time, it was in the midst of battles, sieges, and executions, it was when the whole world was still aghast at the awful spectacle of a British King standing before a judgment seat, and laying his neck on a block, it was when the mangled remains of the Duke of Hamilton had just been laid in the tomb of his house, it was when the head of the Marquess of Montrose had just been fixed on the Tolbooth of Edinburgh, that your University completed her second century.

A hundred years more; and we have at length reached the beginning of a happier period. Our civil and religious liberties had indeed been bought with a fearful price. But they had been bought. The price had been paid. The last battle had been fought on British ground. The last black scaffold had been set up on Tower Hill. The evil days were over. A bright and tranquil century, a century of religious toleration, of domestic peace, of temperate freedom, of equal justice, was beginning. That century is now closing. When we compare it with any equally long period in the history of any other great society, we shall find abundant cause for thankfulness to the Giver of all good. Nor is there any place in the whole kingdom better fitted to excite this feeling than the place where we are now assembled. For in the whole kingdom we shall find no district in which the progress of trade, of manufactures, of wealth, and of the arts of life, has been more rapid than in Clydesdale. Your University has partaken largely of the prosperity of this city and of the surrounding region. The security, the tranquillity, the liberty, which have been propitious to the industry of the merchant and of the manufacturer, have been also propitious to the industry of the scholar. To the last century belong most of the names of which you justly boast. The time would fail me if I attempted to do justice to the memory of all the illustrious men who, during that period, taught or learned wisdom within these ancient walls; geometricians, anatomists, jurists, philologists, metaphysicians, poets: Simpson and Hunter, Millar and Young, Reid and Stewart; Campbell, whose coffin was lately borne to a grave in that renowned transept which contains the dust of Chaucer, of Spenser, and of Dryden; Black, whose discoveries form an era in the history of chemical science; Adam Smith, the greatest of all the masters of political science; James Watt, who perhaps did more than any single man has done, since the New Atlantis of Bacon was written, to accomplish that glorious prophecy. We now speak the language of humility when we say that the University of Glasgow need not fear a comparison with the University of Bologna.

A fifth secular period is about to commence. There is no lack of alarmists who will tell you that it is about to commence under evil auspices. But from me you must expect no such gloomy prognostications. I have heard them too long and too constantly to be scared by them. Ever since I began to make observations on the state of my country, I have been seeing nothing but growth, and hearing of nothing but decay. The more I contemplate our noble institutions, the more convinced I am that they are sound at heart, that they have nothing of age but its dignity, and that their strength is still the strength of youth. The hurricane, which has recently overthrown so much that was great and that seemed durable, has only proved their solidity. They still stand, august and immovable, while dynasties and churches are lying in heaps of ruin all around us. I see no reason to doubt that, by the blessing of God on a wise and temperate policy, on a policy of which the principle is to preserve what is good by reforming in time what is evil, our civil institutions may be preserved unimpaired to a late posterity, and that, under the shade of our civil institutions, our academical institutions may long continue to flourish.

I trust, therefore, that, when a hundred years more have run out, this ancient College will still continue to deserve well of our country and of mankind. I trust that the installation of 1949 will be attended by a still greater assembly of students than I have the happiness now to see before me. That assemblage, indeed, may not meet in the place where we have have met. These venerable halls may have disappeared. My successor may speak to your successors in a more stately edifice, in an edifice which, even among the magnificent buildings of the future Glasgow, will still be admired as a fine specimen of the architecture which flourished in the days of the good Queen Victoria. But, though the site and the walls may be new, the spirit of the institution will, I hope, be still the same. My successor will, I hope, be able to boast that the fifth century of the University has even been more glorious than the fourth. He will be able to vindicate that boast by citing a long list of eminent men, great masters of experimental science, of ancient learning, of our native eloquence, ornaments of the senate, the pulpit and the bar. He will, I hope, mention with high honour some of my young friends who now hear me ; and he will, I also hope, be able to add that their talents and learning were not wasted on selfish or ignoble objects, but were employed to promote the physical and moral good of their species, to extend the empire of man over the material world, to defend the cause of civil and religious liberty against tyrants and bigots, and to defend the cause of virtue and order against the enemies of all divine and human laws.

I have now given utterance to a part, and to a part only, of the recollections and anticipations of which, on this solemn occasion, my mind is full. I again thank you for the honour which you have bestowed on me ; and I assure you that, while I live, I shall never cease to take a deep interest in the welfare and fame of the body with which, by your kindness, I have this day become connected.

A SPEECH

Delivered at Edinburgh on the 2d of November, 1852.

At the General Election of 1852 the votes for the City of Edinburgh stood thus :

Mr Macaulay	1872
Mr Cowan	1754
The Lord Provost	1559
Mr Bruce	1066
Mr Campbell	686

On the second of November the Electors assembled in the Music Hall to meet the representative whom they had, without any solicitation on his part, placed at the head of the poll. On this occasion the following Speech was delivered.

Gentlemen,—I thank you from my heart for this kind reception. In truth, it has almost overcome me. Your good opinion and your good will were always very valuable to me, far more valuable than any vulgar object of ambition, far more valuable than any office, however lucrative or dignified. In truth, no office, however lucrative or dignified, would have tempted me to do what I have done at your summons, to leave again the happiest and most tranquil of all retreats for the bustle of political life. But the honour which you have conferred upon me, an honour of which the greatest men might well be proud, an honour which it is in the power only of a free people to bestow, has laid on me such an obligation that I should have thought it ingratitude, I should have thought it pusillanimity, not to make at least an effort to serve you.

And here, Gentlemen, we meet again in kindness after a long separation. It is more than five years since I last stood in this very place ; a large part of human life. There are few of us on whom those five years have not set their mark, few circles from which those five years have not taken away what can never be replaced. Even in this multitude of friendly faces I look in vain for some which would on this day have been lighted up with joy and kindness. I miss one venerable man, who, before I was born, in evil times, in times of oppression and of corruption, had adhered, with almost solitary fidelity, to the cause of freedom, and whom I knew in advanced age, but still in the full vigour of mind and body, enjoying the respect and gratitude of his fellow citizens. I should, indeed, be most ungrateful if I could, on this day, forget Sir James Craig, his public spirit, his judicious counsel, his fatherly kindness to myself. And Jeffrey —with what an effusion of generous affection he would, on this day, have welcomed me back to Edinburgh ! He too is gone ; but the remembrance of him is one of the many ties which bind me to the city once dear to his heart, and still inseparably associated with his fame.

But, Gentlemen, it is not only here that, on entering again, at your call, a path of life which I believed that I had quitted for ever, I shall be painfully reminded of the changes which the last five years have produced. In Parliament I shall look in vain for virtues which I loved, and for abilities which I admired. Often in debate, and never more than when we discuss those questions of colonial policy which are every day acquiring a new interest, I shall remember with regret how much eloquence and wit, how much acuteness and knowledge, how many engaging qualities, how many fair hopes, are buried in the grave of poor Charles Buller. There were other men, men with whom I had no political connection and little personal connection, men to whom I was, during a great part of my public life, honestly opposed, but of whom I cannot now think without grieving that their wisdom, their experience, and the weight of their great names can never more, in the hour of need, bring help to the nation or to the throne. Such were those two eminent men whom I left at the height, one of civil, the other of military fame ; one the oracle of the House of Commons, the other the oracle of the House of Lords. There were parts of their long public life which they would themselves, I am persuaded, on a calm retrospect, have allowed to be justly censurable. But it is impossible to deny that each in his own department saved the State ; that one brought to a triumphant close the most formidable conflict in which this country was ever engaged with a foreign enemy ; and that the other, at an immense sacrifice of personal feeling and personal ambition, freed us from an odious monopoly, which could not have existed many years longer without producing fearful intestine discords. I regret them both : but I peculiarly regret him who is associated in my mind with the place to which you have sent me. I shall hardly know the House of Commons without Sir Robert Peel. On the first evening on which I took my seat in that House, more than two and twenty years ago, he held the highest position among the Ministers of the Crown who sate there. During all the subsequent years of my parliamentary service I scarcely remember one important discussion in which he did not bear a part with conspicuous ability. His figure is now before me: all the tones of his voice are in my ears; and the pain with which I think that I shall never hear them again would be embittered by the recollection of some sharp encounters which took place between us, were it not that at last there was an entire and cordial reconciliation, and that, only a very few days before his death, I had the pleasure of receiving from him marks of kindness and esteem of which I shall always cherish the recollection.

But, Gentlemen, it is not only by those changes which the natural law of mortality produces, it is not only by the successive disappearances of eminent men that the face of the world has been changed during the five years which have elapsed since we met here last. Never since the origin of our race have there been five years more fertile of great events, five years which have left behind them a more awful lesson. We have lived many lives in that time. The revolutions of ages have been compressed into a few months. France, Germany, Hungary, Italy,—what a history has theirs been! When we met here last, there was in all of those countries an outward show of tranquillity; and there were few, even of the wisest among us, who imagined what wild passions, what wild theories, were fermenting under that peaceful exterior. An obstinate resistance to a reasonable reform, a resistance prolonged but for one day beyond the time, gave the signal for the explosion; and in an instant, from the borders of Russia to the Atlantic Ocean, everything was confusion and terror. The streets of the greatest capitals of Europe were piled up with barricades, and were streaming with civil blood. The house of Orleans fled from France: the Pope fled from Rome: the Emperor of Austria was not safe at Vienna. There were popular institutions in Florence; popular institutions at Naples. One democratic convention sat at Berlin; another democratic convention at Frankfort. You remember, I am sure, but too well, how some of the wisest and most honest friends of liberty, though inclined to look with great indulgence on the excesses inseparable from revolutions, began first to doubt and then to despair of the prospects of mankind. You remember how all sorts of animosity, national, religious, and social, broke forth together. You remember how with the hatred of discontented subjects to their governments was mingled the hatred of race to race and of class to class. For myself, I stood aghast; and though naturally of a sanguine disposition, I did for one moment doubt whether the progress of society was not about to be arrested, nay, to be suddenly and violently turned back; whether we were not doomed to pass in one generation from the civilisation of the nineteenth century to the barbarism of the fifth. I remembered that Adam Smith and Gibbon had told us that the dark ages were gone, never more to return, that modern Europe was in no danger of the fate which had befallen the Roman empire. That flood, they said, would no more return to cover the earth: and they seemed to reason justly: for they compared the immense strength of the enlightened part of the world with the weakness of the part which remained savage; and they asked whence were to come the Huns and the Vandals, who should again destroy civilisation? It had not occurred to them that civilisation itself might engender the barbarians who should destroy it. It had not occurred to them that in the very heart of great capitals, in the neighbourhood of splendid palaces, and churches, and theatres, and libraries, and museums, vice and ignorance might produce a race of Huns fiercer than those who marched under Attila, and of Vandals more bent on destruction than those who followed Genseric. Such was the danger. It passed by. Civilisation was saved; but at what a price! The tide of popular feeling turned and ebbed almost as fast as it had risen. Imprudent and obstinate opposition to reasonable demands had brought on anarchy; and as soon as men had a near view of anarchy they fled in terror to crouch at the feet of despotism. To the dominion of mobs armed with pikes succeeded the sterner and more lasting dominion of disciplined armies. The Papacy rose from its debasement; rose more intolerant and insolent than before; intolerant and insolent as in the days of Hildebrand; intolerant and insolent to a degree which dismayed and disappointed those who had fondly cherished the hope that the spirit which had animated the Crusaders and the Inquisitors had been mitigated by the lapse of years and by the progress of knowledge. Through all that vast region, where little more than four years ago we looked in vain for any stable authority, we now look in vain for any trace of constitutional freedom. And we, Gentlemen, in the meantime, have been exempt from both those calamities which have wrought ruin all around us. The madness of 1848 did not subvert the British throne. The reaction which followed has not destroyed British liberty.

And why is this? Why has our country, with all the ten plagues raging around her, been a land of Goshen? Everywhere else was the thunder and the fire running along the ground,—a very grievous storm,—a storm such as there was none like it since man was on the earth; yet everything tranquil here; and then again thick night, darkness that might be felt; and yet light in all our dwellings. We owe this singular happiness, under the blessing of God, to a wise and noble constitution, the work of many generations of great men. Let us profit by experience; and let us be thankful that we profit by the experience of others, and not by our own. Let us prize our constitution: let us purify it: let us amend it; but let us not destroy it. Let us shun extremes, not only because each extreme is in itself a positive evil, but also because each extreme necessarily engenders its opposite. If we love civil and religious freedom, let us in the day of danger uphold law and order. If we are zealous for law and order, let us prize, as the best safeguard of law and order, civil and religious freedom.

Yes, Gentlemen; if I am asked why we are free with servitude all around us, why our Habeas Corpus Act has not been suspended, why our press is still subject to no censor, why we still have the liberty of association, why our representative institutions still abide in all their strength, I answer, It is because in the year of revolutions we stood firmly by our Government in its peril; and, if I am asked why we stood by our Government in its peril, when men all around us were engaged in pulling Governments down, I answer, It was because we knew that though our Government was not a perfect Government, it was a good Government, that its faults admitted of peaceable and legal remedies, that it had never inflexibly opposed just demands, that we had obtained concessions of inestimable value, not by beating the drum, not by ringing the tocsin, not by tearing up the pavement, not by running to the gunsmiths' shops to search for arms, but by the mere force of reason and public opinion. And, Gentlemen, pre-eminent among those pacific victories of reason and public opinion, the recollection of which chiefly, I believe, carried us safely through the year of revolutions and through the year of counter-revolutions, I would place two great reforms, inseparably associated, one with the memory of an illustrious man, who is now beyond the reach of envy, the other with the name of another illustrious man, who is still, and, I hope, long will be, a living mark for distinction. I speak of the great commercial reform of 1846, the work of Sir Robert Peel, and of the great parliamentary reform of 1832, the work of many eminent statesmen, among whom none was more conspicuous than Lord John Russell. I particularly call your attention to those two great reforms, because it will, in my opinion, be the especial duty of that House of Commons in which, by your distinguished favour, I have a seat, to defend the commercial reform of Sir Robert Peel, and to perfect and extend the parliamentary reform of Lord John Russell.

With respect to the commercial reform, though I say it will be a sacred duty to defend it, I do not apprehend that we shall find the task very difficult. Indeed, I doubt whether we have any reason to apprehend a direct attack upon the system now established. From the expressions used during the last session, and during the late elections, by the Ministers and their adherents, I should, I confess, find it utterly impossible to draw any inference whatever. They have contradicted each other; and they have contradicted themselves. Nothing would be easier than to select from their speeches passages which would prove them to be Freetraders, and passages which would prove them to be Protectionists. But, in truth, the only inference which can properly be drawn from a speech of one of these gentlemen in favour of Free Trade is, that, when he spoke, he was standing for a town; and the only inference which can be drawn from the speech of another in favour of Protection is, that, when he spoke, he was standing for a county. I quitted London in the heat of the elections. I left behind me a Tory candidate for Westminister and a Tory candidate for Middlesex, loudly proclaiming themselves Derbyites and Freetraders. All along my journey through Berkshire and Wiltshire I heard nothing but the cry of Derby and Protection; but when I got to Bristol, the cry was Derby and Free Trade again. On one side of the Wash, Lord Stanley, the Under-Secretary of State for the Foreign Department, a young nobleman of great promise, a young nobleman who appears to me to inherit a large portion of his father's ability and energy, held language which was universally understood to indicate that the Government had altogether abandoned all thought of Protection. Lord Stanley was addressing the inhabitants of a town. Meanwhile, on the other side of the Wash, the Chancellor of the Duchy of Lancaster was haranguing the farmers of Lincolnshire; and, when somebody took it upon him to ask, "What will you do, Mr Christopher, if Lord Derby abandons Protection?" the Chancellor of the Duchy refused to answer a question so monstrous, so insulting to Lord Derby. "I will stand by Lord Derby," he said, "because I know that Lord Derby will stand by Protection." Well, these opposite declarations of two eminent persons, both likely to know the mind of Lord Derby on the subject, go forth, and are taken up by less distinguished adherents of the party. The Tory candidate for Leicestershire says, "I put faith in Mr Christopher: while you see Mr Christopher in the Government, you may be assured that agriculture will be protected." But, in East Surrey, which is really a suburb of London, I find the Tory candidate saying, "Never mind Mr Christopher. I trust to Lord Stanley. What should Mr Christopher know on the subject? He is not in the Cabinet: he can tell you nothing about it. Nay, these tactics were carried so far that Tories who had formerly been for Free Trade, turned Protectionists if they stood for counties; and Tories, who had always been furious Protectionists, declared for Free Trade, without scruple or shame, if they stood for large towns. Take for example Lord Maidstone. He was once one of the most vehement Protectionists in England, and put forth a small volume, which, as I am an elector of Westminster, and as he was a candidate for Westminster, I thought it my duty to buy, in order to understand his opinions. It is entitled Free Trade Hexameters. Of the poetical merits of Lord Maidstone's hexameters I shall not presume to give an opinion. You may all form an opinion for yourselves by ordering copies. They may easily be procured: for I was assured, when I bought mine in Bond Street, that the supply on hand was still considerable. But of the political merits of Lord Maidstone's hexameters I can speak with confidence; and it is impossible to conceive a fiercer attack, according to the measure of the power of the assailant, than that which his lordship made on Sir Robert Peel's policy. On the other hand, Sir Fitzroy Kelly, who is now Solicitor General, and who was Solicitor General under Sir Robert Peel, voted steadily with Sir Robert Peel, doubtless from a regard to the public interest, which would have suffered greatly by the retirement of so able a lawyer from the service of the Crown. Sir Fitzroy did not think it necessary to lay down his office even when Sir Robert Peel brought in the bill which established a free trade in corn. But unfortunately Lord Maidstone becomes a candidate for the City of Westminster, and Sir Fitzroy Kelly stands for an agricultural county. Instantly, therefore, Lord Maidstone forgets his verses, and Sir Fitzroy Kelly forgets his votes. Lord Maidstone declares himself a convert to the opinions of Sir Robert Peel; and Sir Robert Peel's own Solicitor General lifts up his head intrepidly, and makes a speech, apparently composed out of Lord Maidstone's hexameters.

It is therefore, Gentlemen, utterly impossible for me to pretend to infer, from the language held by the members of the Government, and their adherents, what course they will take on the subject of Protection. Nevertheless, I confidently say that the system established by Sir Robert Peel is perfectly safe. The law which repealed the Corn Laws stands now on a much firmer foundation than when it was first passed. We are stronger than ever in reason; and we are stronger than ever in numbers. We are stronger than ever in reason, because what was only prophecy is now history. No person can now question the salutary effect which the repeal of the Corn Laws has had on our trade and industry. We are stronger than ever in numbers. You, I am sure, recollect the time when a formidable opposition to the repeal of the Corn Laws was made by a class which was most deeply interested in that repeal; I mean the labouring classes. You recollect that, in many large towns, ten years ago, the friends of Free Trade could not venture to call meetings for the purpose of petitioning against the Corn Laws, for fear of being interrupted by a crowd of working people, who had been taught by a certain class of demagogues to say that the question was one in which working people had no interest, that it was purely a capitalist's question, that, if the poor man got a large loaf instead of a small one, he would get from the capitalist only a sixpence instead of a shilling. I never had the slightest faith in those doctrines. Experience even then seemed to me completely to confute them. I compared place with place; and I found that, though bread was dearer in England than in Ohio, wages were higher in Ohio than in England. I compared time with time; and I saw that those times when bread was cheapest in England, within my own memory, were also the times in which the condition of the labouring classes was the happiest. But now the experiment has been tried in a manner which admits of no dispute. I should be glad to know, if there were now an attempt made to impose a tax on corn, what demagogue would be able to bring a crowd of working men to hold up their hands in favour of such a tax. Thus strong, Gentlemen, in reason, and thus strong in numbers, we need, I believe, apprehend no direct attack on the principles of Free Trade. It will, however, be one of the first duties of your representatives to be vigilant that no indirect attack shall be made on these principles; and to take care that in our financial arrangements no undue favour shall be shown to any class.

With regard to the other question which I have mentioned, the question of Parliamentary Reform, I think that the time is at hand when that question will require the gravest consideration, when it will be necessary to reconsider the Reform Act of 1832, and to amend it temperately and cautiously, but in a large and liberal spirit. I confess that, in my opinion, this revision cannot be made with advantage, except by the Ministers of the Crown. I greatly doubt whether it will be found possible to carry through any plan of improvement if we have not the Government heartily with us; and I must say that from the present Administration I can, as to that matter, expect nothing good. What precisely I am to expect from them I do not know, whether the most obstinate opposition to every change, or the most insanely violent change. If I look to their conduct, I find the gravest reasons for apprehending that they may at one time resist the most just demands, and at another time, from the merest caprice, propose the wildest innovations. And I will tell you why I entertain this opinion. I am sorry that, in doing so, I must mention the name of a gentleman for whom, personally, I have the highest respect; I mean Mr Walpole, the Secretary of State for the Home Department. My own acquaintance with him is slight; but I know him well by character; and I believe him to be an honourable, an excellent, an able man. No man is more esteemed in private life: but of his public conduct I must claim the right to speak with freedom; and I do so with the less scruple because he has himself set me an example of that freedom, and because I am really now standing on the defensive. Mr Walpole lately made a speech to the electors of Midhurst; and in that speech he spoke personally of Lord John Russell as one honourable man should speak of another, and as, I am sure, I wish always to speak of Mr Walpole. But in Lord John's public conduct Mr Walpole found many faults. Chief among those faults was this, that his lordship had re-opened the question of reform. Mr Walpole declared himself to be opposed on principle to organic change. He justly said that if, unfortunately, organic change should be necessary, whatever was done ought to be done with much deliberation and with caution almost timorous; and he charged Lord John with having neglected these plain rules of prudence. I was perfectly thunderstruck when I read the speech: for I could not but recollect that the most violent and democratic change that ever was proposed within the memory of the oldest man had been proposed but a few weeks before by this same Mr Walpole, as the organ of the present Government. Do you remember the history of the Militia Bill? In general, when a great change in our institutions is to be proposed from the Treasury Bench, the Minister announces his intention some weeks before. There is a great attendance: there is the most painful anxiety to know what he is going to recommend. I well remember,—for I was present,—with what breathless suspense six hundred persons waited, on the first of March, 1831, to hear Lord John Russell explain the principles of his Reform Bill. But what was his Reform Bill to the Reform Bill of the Derby Administration? At the end of a night, in the coolest way possible, without the smallest notice, Mr Walpole proposed to add to the tail of the Militia Bill a clause to the effect, that every man who had served in the militia for two years should have a vote for the county. What is the number of those voters who were to be entitled to vote in this way for counties? The militia of England is to consist of eighty thousand men; and the term of service is to be five years. In ten years the number will be one hundred and sixty thousand; in twenty years, three hundred and twenty thousand; and in twenty-five years, four hundred thousand. Some of these new electors will, of course, die off in twenty-five years, though the lives are picked lives, remarkably good lives. What the mortality is likely to be I do not accurately know; but any actuary will easily calculate it for you. I should say, in round numbers, that you will have, when the system has been in operation for a generation, an addition of about three hundred thousand to the county constituent bodies; that is to say, six thousand voters on the average will be added to every county in England and Wales. That is surely an immense addition. And what is the qualification? Why, the first qualification is youth. These electors are not to be above a certain age; but the nearer you can get them to eighteen the better. The second qualification is poverty. The elector is to be a person to whom a shilling a-day is an object. The third qualification is ignorance; for I venture to say that, if you take the trouble to observe the appearance of those young fellows who follow the recruiting sergeant in the streets, you will at once say that, among our labouring classes, they are not the most educated, they are not the most intelligent. That they are brave, stout lads, I fully believe. Lord Hardinge tells me that he never saw a finer set of young men; and I have not the slightest doubt that, if necessary, after a few weeks' training, they will be found standing up for our firesides against the best disciplined soldiers that the Continent can produce. But these are not the qualifications which fit men to choose legislators. A young man who goes from the ploughtail into the army is generally rather thoughtless and disposed to idleness. Oh! but there is another qualification which I had forgotten: the voter must be five feet two. There is a qualification for you! Only think of measuring a man for the franchise! And this is the work of a Conservative Government, this plan which would swamp all the counties in England with electors who possess the Derby-Walpole qualifications; that is to say, youth, poverty, ignorance, a roving disposition, and five feet two. Why, what right have people who have proposed such a change as this to talk about—I do not say Lord John Russell's imprudence—but the imprudence of Ernest Jones or of any other Chartist? The Chartists, to do them justice, would give the franchise to wealth as well as to poverty, to knowledge as well as to ignorance, to mature age as well as to youth. But to make a qualification compounded of disqualifications is a feat of which the whole glory belongs to our Conservative rulers. This astounding proposition was made, I believe, in a very thin House: but the next day the House was full enough, everybody having come down to know what was going to happen. One asked, why not this? and another, why not that? Are all the regular troops to have the franchise? all the policemen? all the sailors? for, if you give the franchise to ploughboys of twenty-one, what class of honest Englishmen and Scotchmen can you with decency exclude? But up gets the Home Secretary, and informs the House that the plan had not been sufficiently considered, that some of his colleagues were not satisfied, and that he would not press his proposition. Now, if it had happened to me to propose such a reform at one sitting of the House, and at the next sitting to withdraw it, because it had not been well considered, I do think that, to the end of my life, I never should have talked about the exceeding imprudence of reopening the question of reform; I should never have ventured to read any other man a lecture about the caution with which all plans of organic change ought to be framed. I repeat that, if I am to judge from the language of the present Ministers, taken in connection with this solitary instance of their legislative skill in the way of reform, I am utterly at a loss what to expect. On the whole, what I do expect is that they will offer a pertinacious, vehement, provoking opposition to safe and reasonable change, and that then, in some moment of fear or caprice, they will bring in, and fling on the table, in a fit of desperation or levity, some plan which will loosen the very foundations of society.

For my own part, I think that the question of Parliamentary Reform is one which must soon be taken up; but it ought to be taken up by the Government; and I hope, before long, to see in office a Ministry which will take it up in earnest. I dare say that you will not suspect me of saying so from any interested feeling. In no case whatever shall I again be a member of any Ministry. During what may remain of my public life, I shall be the servant of none but you. I have nothing to ask of any government, except that protection which every government owes to a faithful and loyal subject of the Queen. But I do hope to see in office before long a Ministry which will treat this great question as it should be treated. It will be the duty of that Ministry to revise the distribution of power. It will be the duty of that Ministry to consider whether small constituent bodies, notoriously corrupt, and proved to be corrupt, such, for example, as Harwich, ought to retain the power of sending members to Parliament. It will be the duty of such a Ministry to consider whether small constituent bodies, even less notoriously corrupt, ought to have, in the counsels of the empire, a share as great as that of the West Riding of York, and twice as great as that of the county of Perth. It will be the duty of such a Ministry to consider whether it may not be possible, without the smallest danger to peace, law, and order, to extend the elective franchise to classes of the community which do not now possess it. As to universal suffrage, on that subject you already know my opinions; and I now come before you with those opinions strengthened by everything which, since I last professed them, has passed in Europe. We now know, by the clearest of all proofs, that universal suffrage, even united with secret voting, is no security against the establishment of arbitrary power. But, Gentlemen, I do look forward, and at no very remote period, to an extension of the franchise, such as I once thought unsafe. I believe that such an extension will, by the course of events, be brought about in the very best and happiest way. Perhaps I may be sanguine: but I think that good times are coming for the labouring classes of this country. I do not entertain that hope because I expect that Fourierism, or Saint Simonianism, or Socialism, or any of those other "isms" for which the plain English word is "robbery," will prevail. I know that such schemes only aggravate the misery which they pretend to relieve. I know that it is possible, by legislation, to make the rich poor, but that it is utterly impossible to make the poor rich. But I believe that the progress of experimental science, the free intercourse of nation with nation, the unrestricted influx of commodities from countries where they are cheap, and the unrestricted efflux of labour towards countries where it is dear, will soon produce, nay, I believe that they are beginning to produce, a great and most blessed social revolution. I need not tell you, Gentlemen, that in those colonies which have been planted by our race,—and, when I speak of our colonies I speak as well of those which have separated from us as of those which still remain united to us,—I need not tell you that in our colonies the condition of the labouring man has long been far more prosperous than in any part of the Old World. And why is this? Some people tell you that the inhabitants of Pennsylvania and New England are better off than the inhabitants of the Old World, because the United States have a republican form of government. But we know that the inhabitants of Pennsylvania and New England were more prosperous than the inhabitants of the Old World when Pennsylvania and New England were as loyal as any part of the dominions of George the First, George the Second, and George the Third; and we know that in Van Diemen's Land, in New Zealand, in Australasia, in New Brunswick, in Canada, the subjects of Her Majesty are as prosperous as they could be under the government of a President. The real cause is that, in these new countries, where there is a boundless extent of fertile land, nothing is easier than for the labourer to pass from the place which is overstocked with labour to the place which is understocked; and that thus both he who moves and he who stays always have enough. This it is which keeps up the prosperity of the Atlantic States of the Union. They pour their population back to the Ohio, across the Ohio to the Mississippi, and beyond the Mississippi to the Rocky Mountains. Everywhere the desert is receding before the advancing flood of human life and civilisation; and, in the meantime, those who are left behind enjoy abundance, and never endure such privations as in old countries too often befall the labouring classes. And why has not the condition of our labourers been equally fortunate? Simply, as I believe, on account of the great distance which separates our country from the new and unoccupied part of the world, and on account of the expense of traversing that distance. Science, however, has abridged, and is abridging, that distance: science has diminished, and is diminishing, that expense. Already New Zealand is, for all practical purposes, nearer to us than New England was to the Puritans who fled thither from the tyranny of Laud. Already the ports of North America, Halifax, Boston, and New York, are nearer to us than, within the memory of persons now living, the Island of Skye and the county of Donegal were to London. Already emigration is beginning to produce the same effect here which it has produced on the Atlantic States of the Union. And do not imagine that our countryman who goes abroad is altogether lost to us. Even if he goes from under the dominion of the British Queen and the protection of the British flag he will still, under the benignant system of free trade, continue to be bound to us by close ties. If he ceases to be a neighbour, he is still a benefactor and a customer. Go where he may, if you will but maintain that system inviolate, it is for us that he is turning the forests into cornfields on the banks of the Mississippi; it is for us that he is tending his sheep and preparing his fleeces in the heart of Australasia; and in the meantime it is from us that he receives those commodities which are produced with most advantage in old societies, where great masses of capital have been accumulated. His candlesticks and his pots and his pans come from Birmingham; his knives from Sheffield; the light cotton jacket which he wears in summer from Manchester; the good cloth coat which he wears in winter from Leeds; and in return he sends us back, from what was lately a wilderness, the good flour out of which is made the large loaf which the British labourer divides among his children. I believe that it is in these changes that we shall see the best solution of the question of the franchise. We shall make our institutions more democratic than they are, not by lowering the franchise to the level of the great mass of the community, but by raising, in a time which will be very short when compared with the existence of a nation, the great mass up to the level of the franchise.

I feel that I must stop. I had meant to advert to some other subjects. I had meant to say something about the ballot, to which, as you know, I have always been favourable; something about triennial parliaments, to which, as you know, I have always been honestly opposed; something about your university tests; something about the cry for religious equality which has lately been raised in Ireland; but I feel that I cannot well proceed. I have only strength to thank you again, from the very bottom of my heart, for the great honour which you have done me in choosing me, without solicitation, to represent you in Parliament. I am proud of our connection; and I shall try to act in such a manner that you may not be ashamed of it.

A SPEECH

Delivered in the House of Commons on the 1st of June 1853.

On the first of June 1853, Lord Hotham, Member for Kent, moved the third reading of a bill of which the chief object was to make the Master of the Rolls incapable of sitting in the House of Commons. Mr Henry Drummond, Member for Surrey, moved that the bill should be read a third time that day six months. In support of Mr Drummond's amendment the following Speech was made.

The amendment was carried by 224 votes to 123.

I cannot, Sir, suffer the House to proceed to a division without expressing the very strong opinion which I have formed on this subject. I shall give my vote, with all my heart and soul, for the amendment moved by my honourable friend the Member for Surrey. I never gave a vote in my life with a more entire confidence that I was in the right; and I cannot but think it discreditable to us that a bill for which there is so little to be said, and against which there is so much to be said, should have been permitted to pass through so many stages without a division.

On what grounds, Sir, does the noble lord, the Member for Kent, ask us to make this change in the law? The only ground, surely, on which a Conservative legislator ought ever to propose a change in the law is this, that the law, as it stands, has produced some evil. Is it then pretended that the law, as it stands, has produced any evil? The noble lord himself tells you that it has produced no evil whatever. Nor can it be said that the experiment has not been fairly tried. This House and the office of Master of the Rolls began to exist, probably in the same generation, certainly in the same century. During six hundred years this House has been open to Masters of the Rolls. Many Masters of the Rolls have sate here, and have taken part, with great ability and authority, in our deliberations. To go no further back than the accession of the House of Hanover, Jekyll was a member of this House, and Strange, and Kenyon, and Pepper Arden, and Sir William Grant, and Sir John Copley, and Sir Charles Pepys, and finally Sir John Romilly. It is not even pretended that any one of these eminent persons was ever, on any single occasion, found to be the worse member of this House for being Master of the Rolls, or the worse Master of the Rolls for being a member of this House. And if so, is it, I ask, the part of a wise statesman, is it, I ask still more emphatically, the part of a Conservative statesman, to alter a system which has lasted six centuries, and which has never once, during all those centuries, produced any but good effects, merely because it is not in harmony with an abstract principle?

And what is the abstract principle for the sake of which we are asked to innovate in reckless defiance of all the teaching of experience? It is this; that political functions ought to be kept distinct from judicial functions. So sacred, it seems, is this principle, that the union of the political and judicial characters ought not to be suffered to continue even in a case in which that union has lasted through many ages without producing the smallest practical inconvenience. "Nothing is so hateful," I quote the words of the noble lord who brought in this bill, "nothing is so hateful as a political judge."

Now, Sir, if I assent to the principle laid down by the noble lord, I must pronounce his bill the most imbecile, the most pitiful, attempt at reform that ever was made. The noble lord is a homœopathist in state medicine. His remedies are administered in infinitesimal doses. If he will, for a moment, consider how our tribunals are constituted, and how our parliament is constituted, he will perceive that the judicial and political character are, through all grades, everywhere combined, everywhere interwoven, and that therefore the evil which he proposes to remove vanishes, as the mathematicians say, when compared with the immense mass of evil which he leaves behind.

It has been asked, and very sensibly asked, why, if you exclude the Master of the Rolls from the House, you should not also exclude the Recorder of the City of London. I should be very sorry to see the Recorder of the City of London excluded. But I must say that the reasons for excluding him are ten times as strong as the reasons for excluding the Master of the Rolls. For it is well known that political cases of the highest importance have been tried by Recorders of the City of London. But why not exclude all Recorders, and all Chairmen of Quarter Sessions? I venture to say that there are far stronger reasons for excluding a Chairman of Quarter Sessions than for excluding a Master of the Rolls. I long ago attended, during two or three years, the Quarter Sessions of a great county. There I constantly saw in the chair an eminent member of this House. An excellent criminal judge he was. Had he been a veteran lawyer, he could hardly have tried causes more satisfactorily or more expeditiously. But he was a keen politician: he had made a motion which had turned out a Government; and when he died he was a Cabinet Minister. Yet this gentleman, the head of the Blue interest, as it was called, in his county, might have had to try men of the Orange party for rioting at a contested election. He voted for the corn laws; and he might have had to try men for breaches of the peace which had originated in the discontent caused by the corn laws. He was, as I well remember, hooted, and, I rather think, pelted too, by the mob of London for his conduct towards Queen Caroline; and, when he went down to his county, he might have had to sit in judgment on people for breaking windows which had not been illuminated in honour of Her Majesty's victory. This is not a solitary instance. There are, I dare say, in this House, fifty Chairmen of Quarter Sessions. And this is an union of judicial and political functions against which there is really much to be said. For it is important, not only that the administration of justice should be pure, but that it should be unsuspected. Now I am willing to believe that the administration of justice by the unpaid magistrates in political cases is pure: but unsuspected it certainly is not. It is notorious that, in times of political excitement, the cry of the whole democratic press always is that a poor man, who has been driven by distress to outrage, has far harder measure at the Quarter Sessions than at the Assizes. So loud was this cry in 1819 that Mr Canning, in one of his most eloquent speeches, pronounced it the most alarming of all the signs of the times. See then how extravagantly, how ludicrously inconsistent your legislation is. You lay down the principle that the union of political functions and judicial functions is a hateful abuse. That abuse you determine to remove. You accordingly leave in this House a crowd of judges who, in troubled times, have to try persons charged with political offences; of judges who have often been accused, truly or falsely, of carrying to the judgment seat their political sympathies and antipathies; and you shut out of the house a single judge, whose duties are of such a nature that it has never once, since the time of Edward the First, been even suspected that he or any of his predecessors has, in the administration of justice, favoured a political ally, or wronged a political opponent.

But even if I were to admit, what I altogether deny, that there is something in the functions of the Master of the Rolls which makes it peculiarly desirable that he should not take any part in politics, I should still vote against this bill, as most inconsistent and inefficient. If you think that he ought to be excluded from political assemblies, why do not you exclude him? You do no such thing. You exclude him from the House of Commons, but you leave the House of Lords open to him. Is not the House of Lords a political assembly? And is it not certain that, during several generations, judges have generally had a great ascendency in the House of Lords? A hundred years ago a great judge, Lord Hardwicke, possessed an immense influence there. He bequeathed his power to another great judge, Lord Mansfield. When age had impaired the vigour of Lord Mansfield, the authority which he had, during many years, enjoyed, passed to a third judge, Lord Thurlow. Everybody knows what a dominion that eminent judge, Lord Eldon, exercised over the peers, what a share he took in making and unmaking ministries, with what idolatrous veneration he was regarded by one great party in the State, with what dread and aversion he was regarded by the other. When the long reign of Lord Eldon had terminated, other judges, Whig and Tory, appeared at the head of contending factions. Some of us can well remember the first ten days of October, 1831. Who, indeed, that lived through those days can ever forget them? It was the most exciting, the most alarming political conjuncture of my time. On the morning of the eighth of October, the Reform Bill, after a discussion which had lasted through many nights, was rejected by the Lords. God forbid that I should again see such a crisis! I can never hope again to hear such a debate. It was indeed a splendid display of various talents and acquirements. There are, I dare say, some here who, like myself, watched through the last night of that conflict till the late autumnal dawn, sometimes walking up and down the long gallery, sometimes squeezing ourselves in behind the throne, or below the bar, to catch the eloquence of the great orators who, on that great occasion, surpassed themselves. There I saw, in the foremost ranks, confronting each other, two judges, on one side Lord Brougham, Chancellor of the realm, on the other Lord Lyndhurst, Chief Baron of the Exchequer. How eagerly we hung on their words! How eagerly those words were read before noon by hundreds of thousands in the capital, and, within forty-eight hours, by millions in every part of the kingdom! With what a burst of popular fury the decision of the House was received by the nation! The ruins of Nottingham Castle, the ruins of whole streets and squares at Bristol, proved but too well to what a point the public feeling had been wound up. If it be true that nothing is so hateful to the noble lord, the Member for Kent, as a judge who takes part in political contentions, why does he not bring in a bill to prevent judges from entering those lists in which Lord Brougham and Lord Lyndhurst then encountered each other? But no: the noble lord is perfectly willing to leave those lists open to the Master of the Rolls. The noble lord's objection is not to the union of the judicial character and the political character. He is quite willing that anywhere but here judges should be politicians. The Master of the Rolls may be the soul of a great party, the head of a great party, the favourite tribune of a stormy democracy, the chief spokesman of a haughty aristocracy. He may do all that declamation and sophistry can do to inflame the passions or mislead the judgment of a senate. But it must not be in this room. He must go a hundred and fifty yards hence. He must sit on a red bench, and not on a green one. He must say, "My Lords," and not "Mr Speaker." He must say, "Content," and not "Aye." And then he may, without at all shocking the noble lord, be the most stirring politician in the kingdom.

But I am understating my case. I am greatly understating it. For, Sir, this union of the judicial character and the political character, in Members of the other House of Parliament, is not a merely accidental union. Not only may judges be made peers; but all the peers are necessarily judges. Surely when the noble lord told us that the union of political functions and of judicial functions was the most hateful of all things, he must have forgotten that, by the fundamental laws of the realm, a political assembly is the supreme court of appeal, the court which finally confirms or annuls the judgments of the courts, both of common law and of equity, at Westminster, of the courts of Scotland, of the courts of Ireland, of this very Master of the Rolls about whom we are debating. Surely, if the noble lord's principle be a sound one, it is not with the Master of the Rolls but with the House of Peers that we ought to begin. For, beyond all dispute, it is more important that the court above should be constituted on sound principles than that the court below should be so constituted. If the Master of the Rolls goes wrong, the House of Peers may correct his errors. But who is to correct the errors of the House of Peers? All these considerations the noble lord overlooks. He is quite willing that the peers shall sit in the morning as judges, shall determine questions affecting the property, the liberty, the character of the Queen's subjects, shall determine those questions in the last resort, shall overrule the decisions of all the other tribunals in the country ; and that then, in the afternoon, these same noble persons shall meet as politicians, and shall debate, sometimes rather sharply, sometimes in a style which we dare not imitate for fear that you, Sir, should call us to order, about the Canadian Clergy Reserves, the Irish National Schools, the Disabilities of the Jews, the Government of India. I do not blame the noble lord for not attempting to alter this state of things. We cannot alter it, I know, without taking up the foundations of our constitution. But is it not absurd, while we live under such a constitution, while, throughout our whole system from top to bottom, political functions and judicial functions are combined, to single out, not on any special ground, but merely at random, one judge from a crowd of judges, and to exclude him, not from all political assemblies, but merely from one political assembly? Was there ever such a mummery as the carrying of this bill to the other House will be, if, unfortunately, it should be carried thither. The noble lord, himself, I have no doubt, a magistrate, himself at once a judge and a politician, accompanied by several gentlemen who are at once judges and politicians, will go to the bar of the Lords, who are all at once judges and politicians, will deliver the bill into the hands of the Chancellor, who is at once the chief judge of the realm and a Cabinet Minister, and will return hither proud of having purified the administration of justice from the taint of politics.

No, Sir, no ; for the purpose of purifying the administration of justice this bill is utterly impotent. It will be effectual for one purpose, and for one purpose only, for the purpose of weakening and degrading the House of Commons. This is not the first time that an attempt has been made, under specious pretexts, to lower the character and impair the efficiency of the assembly which represents the great body of the nation. More than a hundred and fifty years ago there was a general cry that the number of placemen in Parliament was too great. No doubt, Sir, the number was too great : the evil required a remedy : but some rash and short-sighted though probably well meaning men, proposed a remedy which would have produced far more evil than it would have removed. They inserted in the Act of Settlement a clause providing that no person who held any office under the Crown should sit in this House. The clause was not to take effect till the House of Hanover should come to the throne ; and, happily for the country, before the House of Hanover came to the throne, the clause was repealed. Had it not been repealed, the Act of Settlement would have been, not a blessing, but a curse to the country. There was no want, indeed, of plausible and popular commonplaces in favour of this clause. No man, it was said, can serve two masters. A courtier cannot be a good guardian of public liberty. A man who derives his subsistence from the taxes cannot be trusted to check the public expenditure. You will never have purity, you will never have economy, till the stewards of the nation are independent of the Crown, and dependent only on their constituents. Yes ; all this sounded well : but what man of sense now doubts that the effect of a law excluding all official men from this House would have been to depress that branch of the legislature which springs from the people, and to increase the power and consideration of the hereditary aristocracy? The whole administration would have been in the hands of peers. The chief object of every eminent Commoner would have been to obtain a peerage. As soon as any man had gained such distinction here by his eloquence and knowledge that he was selected to fill the post of Chancellor of the Exchequer, Secretary of State, or First Lord of the Admiralty, he would instantly have turned his back on what would then indeed have been emphatically the Lower House, and would have gone to that chamber in which alone it would have been possible for him fully to display his abilities and fully to gratify his ambition. Walpole and Pulteney, the first Pitt and the second Pitt, Fox, Windham, Canning, Peel, all the men whose memory is inseparably associated with this House, all the men of whose names we think with pride as we pass through St Stephen's Hall, the place of their contentions and their triumphs, would, in the vigour and prime of life, have become Barons and Viscounts. The great conflict of parties would have been transferred from the Commons to the Lords. It would have been impossible for an assembly, in which not a single statesman of great fame, authority, and experience in important affairs would have been found, to hold its own against an assembly in which all our eminent politicians and orators would have been collected. All England, all Europe, would have been reading with breathless interest the debates of the peers, and looking with anxiety for the divisions of the peers, while we, instead of discussing high questions of state, and giving a general direction to the whole domestic and foreign policy of the realm, should have been settling the details of canal bills and turnpike bills.

The noble lord, the Member for Kent, does not, it is true, propose so extensive and important a change as that which the authors of the Act of Settlement wished to make. But the tendency of this bill is, beyond all doubt, to make this House less capable than it once was, and less capable than the other House now is, of discharging some of the most important duties of a legislative assembly.

Of the duties of a legislative assembly, the noble lord, and some of those gentlemen who support his bill, seem to me to have formed a very imperfect notion. They argue as if the only business of the House of Commons was to turn one set of men out of place, and to bring another set into place ; as if a judge could find no employment here but factious wrangling. Sir, it is not so. There are extensive and peaceful provinces of parliamentary business far removed from the fields of battle where hostile parties encounter each other. A great jurist, seated among us, might, without taking any prominent part in the strife between the Ministry and the Opposition, render to his country most valuable service, and earn for himself an imperishable name. Nor was there ever a time when the assistance of such a jurist was more needed, or was more likely to be justly appreciated, than at present. No observant man can fail to perceive that there is in the public mind a general, a growing, an earnest, and at the same time, I must say, a most sober and reasonable desire for extensive law reform. I hope and believe that, for some time to come, no year will pass without progress in law reform ; and I hold that of all law reformers the best is a learned, upright, and large-minded judge. At such a time it is that we are called upon to shut the door of this House against the last great judicial functionary to whom the unwise legislation of former parliaments has left it open. In the meantime the other House is open to him. It is open to all the other judges who are not suffered to sit here. It is open to the Judge of the Admiralty Court, whom the noble lord, twelve or thirteen years ago, prevailed on us, in an unlucky hour, to exclude. In the other House is the Lord Chancellor, and several retired Chancellors, a Lord Chief Justice, and several retired Chief Justices. The Queen may place there to-morrow the Chief Baron, the two Lords Justices, the three Vice Chancellors, the very Master of the Rolls about whom we are debating: and we, as if we were not already too weak for the discharge of our functions, are trying to weaken ourselves still more. I harbour no unfriendly feeling towards the Lords. I anticipate no conflict with them. But it is not fit that we should be unable to bear an equal part with them in the great work of improving and digesting the law. It is not fit that we should be under the necessity of placing implicit confidence in their superior wisdom, and of registering without amendment, any bill which they may send us. To that humiliating situation we are, I grieve to say, fast approaching. I was much struck by a circumstance which occurred a few days ago. I heard the honourable Member for Montrose, who, by the by, is one of the supporters of this bill, urge the House to pass the Combination Bill, for a most extraordinary reason. "We really," he said, "cannot tell how the law about combinations of workmen at present stands; and, not knowing how the law at present stands, we are quite incompetent to decide whether it ought to be altered. Let us send the bill up to the Lords. They understand these things. We do not. There are Chancellors, and ex-Chancellors, and Judges among them. No doubt they will do what is proper; and I shall acquiesce in their decision." Why, Sir, did ever any legislative assembly abdicate its functions in so humiliating a manner? Is it not strange that a gentleman, distinguished by his love of popular institutions, and by the jealousy with which he regards the aristocracy, should gravely propose that, on a subject which interests and excites hundreds of thousands of our constituents, we should declare ourselves incompetent to form an opinion, and beg the Lords to tell us what we ought to do? And is it not stranger still that, while he admits the incompetence of the House to discharge some of its most important functions, and while he attributes that incompetence to the want of judicial assistance, he should yet wish to shut out of the House the only high judicial functionary who is now permitted to come into it?

But, says the honourable Member for Montrose, the Master of the Rolls has duties to perform which, if properly performed, will leave him no leisure for attendance in this House: it is important that there should be a division of labour: no man can do two things well; and, if we suffer a judge to be a member of Parliament, we shall have both a bad member of Parliament and a bad judge.

Now, Sir, if this argument proves anything, it proves that the Master of the Rolls, and indeed all the other judges, ought to be excluded from the House of Lords as well as from the House of Commons. But I deny that the argument is of any weight. The division of labour has its disadvantages as well as its advantages. In operations merely mechanical you can hardly carry the subdivision too far; but you may very easily carry it too far in operations which require the exercise of high intellectual powers. It is quite true, as Adam Smith tells us, that a pin will be best made when one man does nothing but cut the wire, when another does nothing but mould the head, when a third does nothing but sharpen the point. But it is not true that Michael Angelo would have been a greater painter if he had not been a sculptor: it is not true that Newton would have been a greater experimental philosopher if he had not been a geometrician; and it is not true that a man will be a worse lawgiver because he is a great judge. I believe that there is as close a connection between the functions of the judge and the functions of the lawgiver as between anatomy and surgery. Would it not be the height of absurdity to lay down the rule that nobody who dissected the dead should be allowed to operate on the living? The effect of such a division of labour would be that you would have nothing but bungling surgery; and the effect of the division of labour which the honourable Member for Montrose recommends will be that we shall have plenty of bungling legislation. Who can be so well qualified to make laws and to mend laws as a man whose business is to interpret laws and to administer laws? As to this point I have great pleasure in citing an authority to which the honourable Member for Montrose will, I know, be disposed to pay the greatest deference; the authority of Mr Bentham. Of Mr Bentham's moral and political speculations, I entertain, I must own, a very mean opinion: but I hold him in high esteem as a jurist. Among all his writings there is none which I value more than the treatise on Judicial Organization. In that excellent work he discusses the question whether a person who holds a judicial office ought to be permitted to hold with it any other office. Mr Bentham argues strongly and convincingly against pluralities; but he admits that there is one exception to the general rule. A judge, he says, ought to be allowed to sit in the legislature as a representative of the people; for the best school for a legislator is the judicial bench; and the supply of legislative skill is in all societies so scanty that none of it can be spared.

My honourable friend, the Member for Surrey, has completely refuted another argument to which the noble lord, the Member for Kent, appears to attach considerable importance. The noble lord conceives that no person can enter this House without stooping to practise arts which would ill become the gravity of the judicial character. He spoke particularly of what he called the jollifications usual at elections. Undoubtedly the festivities at elections are sometimes disgraced by intemperance, and sometimes by buffoonery; and I wish from the bottom of my heart that intemperance and buffoonery were the worst means to which men, reputed upright and honourable in private life, have resorted in order to obtain seats in the legislature. I should, indeed, be sorry if any Master of the Rolls should court the favour of the populace by playing the mountebank on the hustings or on tavern tables. Still more sorry should I be if any Master of the Rolls were to disgrace himself and his office by employing the ministry of the Frails and the Flewkers, by sending vile emissaries with false names, false addresses, and bags of sovereigns, to buy the votes of the poor. No doubt a Master of the Rolls ought to be free, not only from guilt, but from suspicion. I have not hitherto mentioned the present Master of the Rolls. I have not mentioned him because, in my opinion, this question ought to be decided by general and not by personal considerations. I cannot, however, refrain from saying, with a confidence which springs from long and intimate acquaintance, that my valued friend, Sir John Romilly, will never again sit in this House unless he can come in by means very different from those by which he was turned out. But, Sir, are we prepared to say that no person can become a representative of the English people except by some sacrifice of integrity, or at least of personal dignity? If it be so, we had indeed better think of setting our House in order. If it be so, the prospects of our country are dark indeed. How can England retain her place among the nations, if the assembly to which all her dearest interests are confided, the assembly which can, by a single vote, transfer the management of her affairs to new hands, and give a new direction to her whole policy, foreign and domestic, financial, commercial, and colonial, is closed against every man who has rigid principles and a fine sense of decorum? But it is not so. Did that great judge, Sir William Scott, lower his character by entering this House as Member for the University of Oxford? Did Sir John Copley lower his character by entering this House as Member for the University of Cambridge? But the universities, you say, are constituent bodies of a very peculiar kind. Be it so. Then, by your own admission, there are a few seats in this House which eminent judges have filled and may fill without any unseemly condescension. But it would be most unjust, and in me, especially, most ungrateful, to compliment the universities at the expense of other constituent bodies. I am one of many members who know by experience that a generosity and a delicacy of sentiment which would do honour to any seat of learning may be found among the ten pound householders of our great cities. And, Sir, as to the counties, need we look further than to your chair? It is of as much importance that you should punctiliously preserve your dignity as that the Master of the Rolls should punctiliously preserve his dignity. If you had, at the last election, done anything inconsistent with the integrity, with the gravity, with the suavity of temper which so eminently qualify you to preside over our deliberations, your public usefulness would have been seriously diminished. But the great county which does itself honour by sending you to the House required from you nothing unbecoming your character, and would have felt itself degraded by your degradation. And what reason is there to doubt that other constituent bodies would act as justly and considerately towards a judge distinguished by uprightness and ability as Hampshire has acted towards you?

One very futile argument only remains to be noticed. It is said that we ought to be consistent; and that, having turned the Judge of the Admiralty out of the House, we ought to send the Master of the Rolls after him. I admit, Sir, that our system is at present very anomalous. But it is better that a system should be anomalous than that it should be uniformly and consistently bad. You have entered on a wrong course. My advice is first that you stop, and secondly that you retrace your steps. The time is not far distant when it will be necessary for us to revise the constitution of this House. On that occasion, it will be part of our duty to reconsider the rule which determines what public functionaries shall be admitted to sit here, and what public functionaries shall be excluded. That rule is, I must say, singularly absurd. It is this, that no person who holds any office created since the twenty-fifth of October, 1705, shall be a member of the House of Commons. Nothing can be more unreasonable or more inconvenient. In 1705, there were two Secretaries of State and two Under Secretaries. Consequently, to this day, only two Secretaries of State and two Under Secretaries can sit among us. Suppose that the Home Secretary and the Colonial Secretary are members of this House, and that the office of Foreign Secretary becomes vacant. In that case, no member of this House, whatever may be his qualifications, his fame in diplomacy, his knowledge of all the politics of the Courts of Europe, can be appointed. Her Majesty must give the Admiralty to the commoner who is, of all her subjects, fittest for the Foreign Office, and the seals of the Foreign Office to some peer who would perhaps be fitter for the Admiralty. Again, the Postmaster General cannot sit in this House. Yet why not? He always comes in and goes out with the Government: he is often a member of the Cabinet; and I believe that he is, of all public functionaries, the Chancellor of the Exchequer alone excepted, the one whom it would be most convenient to have here. I earnestly hope that, before long, this whole subject will be taken into serious consideration. As to the judges, the rule which I should wish to see laid down is very simple. I would admit into this House any judge whom the people might elect, unless there were some special reason against admitting him. There is a special reason against admitting any Irish or Scotch judge. Such a judge cannot attend this House without ceasing to attend his court. There is a special reason against admitting the Judges of the Queen's Bench and of the Common Pleas, and the Barons of the Exchequer. They are summoned to the House of Lords; and they sit there: their assistance is absolutely necessary to enable that House to discharge its functions as the highest court of appeal; and it would manifestly be both inconvenient and derogatory to our dignity that members of our body should be at the beck and call of the peers. I see no special reason for excluding the Master of the Rolls; and I would, therefore, leave our door open to him. I would open it to the Judge of the Admiralty, who has been most unwisely excluded. I would open it to other great judicial officers who are now excluded solely because their offices did not exist in 1705, particularly to the two Lords Justices, and the three Vice Chancellors. In this way, we should, I am convinced, greatly facilitate the important and arduous work of law reform; we should raise the character of this House: and I need not say that with the character of this House must rise or fall the estimation in which representative institutions are held throughout the world. But, whether the extensive changes which I have recommended shall be thought desirable or not, I trust that we shall reject the bill of the noble lord. I address myself to the Conservative members on your left hand; and I ask them whether they are prepared to alter, on grounds purely theoretical, a system which has lasted during twenty generations without producing the smallest practical evil. I turn to the Liberal members on this side; and I ask them whether they are prepared to lower the reputation and to impair the efficiency of that branch of the legislature which springs from the people. For myself, Sir, I hope that I am at once a Liberal and a Conservative politician; and, in both characters, I shall give a clear and conscientious vote in favour of the amendment moved by my honourable friend.

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